WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS:
A NATIONAL INVENTORY

by Carolyne Gorlick and Guy Brethour

Canadian Council on Social Development, December 1998

Welfare-to-Work Programs: A National Inventory provides comprehensive information about provincial and territorial efforts to integrate people on social assistance into the workforce. The inventory provides a detailed description of the participants, goals and costs of welfare-to-work programs from Prince Edward Island to the Yukon.

An essential reference guide for workers, decision-makers, researchers and students in the social policy field.

La section sur le Québec est rédigée en français dans ce Répertoire des programmes de transition de l'assistance sociale au marché du travail.

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Note to Readers

This Inventory is part of a larger research project, *Welfare-to-work Programs and Their Impact on Low-income Single-mother Families*, that was funded by Social Development Partnerships, Human Resources Development Canada. In the first phase of this project, an instrument was developed to collect data and interviews were conducted with senior provincial and territorial government officials. Once the data were collected, reviewed and edited, the information was resubmitted to provincial and territorial officials to check its accuracy and to offer any recent information about developments that had occurred between the original data collection in Spring 1997 and Spring 1998. This document, *Welfare-to-work Programs: A National Inventory*, is the end result of the first phase of the project.

In the second phase of the project, the relationships between the design of welfare-to-work programs, available community resources, and individual family capacities will be analysed.

This Inventory is important and timely, given the ongoing and fundamental changes that are occurring in Canada's social security system. The decentralization of social programs – a main feature of the reforms – has lead to a growing diversity in welfare-to-work initiatives, but to date, little has been documented about the variety of approaches being used.

In this Inventory, contact persons are listed for readers who wish to pursue further information about a particular provincial or territorial program, although they are not necessarily the same individuals who provided the information for this report. The Inventory is published primarily in English. However, the section on programs in Quebec is published in French, with an English summary at the beginning of that chapter. Early in 1999, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) will publish all of the provincial and territorial summaries in a separate document that will be available in both English and French.

Other related publications from the CCSD include:

Welfare-to-Work Programs in Canada: An Overview, by Carolyne Gorlick and Guy Brethour
Welfare-to-Work Programs: A CCSD Position Paper (forthcoming)
Welfare-to-Work Program Summaries (forthcoming)

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Carolyne A. Gorlick and *Guy Brethour*

NEWFOUNDLAND/LABRADOR

Summary

The Supports to Employment Program (STEP) is administered by the Department of Human Resources and Employment. Its primary mandate is to develop people as a source of prosperity; its primary services are income support, employment support and labour-market programming. STEP began in 1996–97, but it is a fourth generation of previous programming that dates back to 1972. Fiscal year 1997–98 was a transition year during which services continued to be delivered through existing systems. The new program was in place as of April 1, 1998.

STEP is designed to assist recipients to make the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency. STEP provides programming to assist individuals with career planning, assessment and counselling, academic upgrading, skills training and work experience placements, all of which prepare them to compete in the labour market. For the most part, activities under STEP are delivered through third parties on behalf of the province.

All employable social assistance recipients are eligible for STEP. No employability criteria have been developed, and no tool is used to define employability. Participation is encouraged, but not obligatory. Recipients who are referred to a program can choose not to pursue it, without sanction. Any person who applies for or receives social assistance has the right to have any decision of the financial assistance officer, social worker or program supervisor reviewed or appealed. Any decision of any worker with respect to the granting, refusal, suspension, discontinuation, reduction, resumption or amount of social assistance can be appealed, as can any matter related to participation in STEP.

Programming was designed to allow regions to match services and employment opportunities to local situations. The framework is flexible enough to support the direction taken by each of the regional economic development boards. Although the full range of employment services offered by the department is not readily available on a province-wide basis – particularly for people outside St. John's – partnership arrangements and co-location of services with Human Resource Development Canada are improving accessibility. The program attempts to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding jobs in the local economy, but a minimal amount of displacement does occur. The department will not continue to contract with an employer who knowingly displaces workers.

For the most part, services are delivered in accordance with individual need and are not based on membership in a particular group. Nonetheless, STEP does take the specific needs of single parents, youth and aboriginal Canadians into account. No consideration was given to promoting well-paid jobs for women in particular; however, the program has worked with groups such as Women Interested in Employment (WISE) to encourage women to complete high school.

The STEP budget for 1997–98 was approximately $7.3 million; however, through the various partnership arrangements, income support recipients have access to programs funded by other government departments. During 1996–97, 4,330 individuals received services under STEP, involving a direct expenditure of $6,045,200.

Orientation and follow-up of program participants are improving with the advent of various partnership arrangements and co-location of services with HRDC. In the greater St. John's area, where 40% of all employable recipients live, weekly orientation sessions about available services are offered by a special unit to interested individuals. Recipients are streamed to the appropriate service after these sessions. Outside the St. John's area, both orientation and follow-up are sparse. The focus is on the granting of assistance and related eligibility requirements.

Generally, there has been little evaluation of social assistance programming. STEP is not being evaluated, nor is there any budget for evaluation. It is expected that more emphasis will be placed on evaluation as current programs are redesigned. Some of the program pieces have been monitored informally.

A monitoring system is being developed to track program participants. Their continued performance in the program is evaluated by attendance checks. Also, progress reports are received from the third parties providing the service.

In light of the complexity of issues, the growth in information technology and the need for a new income support program, it is estimated that it will be April 1, 2001, before programs are fully functional. For 1998–99, STEP has been amalgamated with other labour market programs. Nonetheless, STEP delivery will continue to target social assistance recipients, and other labour market programs will offer opportunities for social assistance recipients but serve the general population. As program development occurs, there will be opportunities for pilots leading to a full implementation of programs by 2001–2.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Program

Supports to Employment Program (STEP)

Description

STEP is a program of the Department of Human Resources and Employment. Its primary mandate is to develop people as a source of prosperity; its primary services are income support, employment support and labour-market programming.

The program is part of the province's attempt to move away from a passive income support system to a more active system in which the recipient of income support participates more fully in exiting the system. STEP is designed to assist recipients to make the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency; it was named in recognition of the supports that recipients often require in making this transition.

STEP provides programming to assist individuals with career planning, assessment and counselling, academic upgrading, skills training and work experience placements, all of which prepares them to compete in the labour market. The programming is results based and must demonstrate accountability through timely evaluation.

Goals

STEP has the following goals:

- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment
- develop the short-term work skills of program participants. Training relates to short-term training courses not covered by the student loan program.
- develop the long-term work skills of program participants.
- promote lasting connections to the labour market
- reduce the rate at which people leave employment and return to social assistance
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance
- reduce poverty. Through the income assistance program, the province attempts to provide a basic standard of living.

- remove the stigma often attached to income assistance recipients. This stigma is often a barrier to employment. The successful placement of recipients with employers demonstrates that recipients are good workers; thus, successful placements promote attitude change.
- change societal attitudes toward people on welfare.

The province does not try to make employment financially more attractive than social assistance, as Newfoundland has one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada; social assistance rates are also among the lowest.

Objectives

The objectives of STEP are to
promote active rather than passive income support

- focus on the importance of human resource issues
- build a strong training culture involving all partners in the labour market
- meet the many changes in the labour market (technological, demographic)
- resolve education and training problems
- ensure competitiveness

Program Rationale

Social assistance programming and the delivery system are in the midst of change in Newfoundland. Following on the heels of a strategic economic plan for the province, a province-wide public consultation process was completed in March of 1997.

Information gained through these consultations was used to redesign and harmonize programming for the unemployed population and thus improve the employment situation in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As of April 1, 1997, Employment and Labour Market programs, formerly under the Department of Development and Rural Renewal, were incorporated with programs of the Department of Social Services to become the Department of Human Resources and Employment.

An internal working group struck to redesign the income assistance program began work on June 1, 1997, and the new program was implemented April 1, 1998. The redesign will result in a streamlined income support program and labour market programs for the entire province.

Under the Canada Health and Social Transfer, funding for programs is about $100 million less in 1996–97 than it was under the old legislation.

History

Although STEP began only in 1996–97, it is a recent generation of programming dating back to 1972. The Department of Social Services first became involved in employment programming in the early 1970s. Initially, the program concept was based on a philosophy of assessment, counselling and job search. By the mid-1970s, funding was being provided for job creation and the program philosophy changed completely as it became profitable to remove individuals from social assistance through "make-work".

The make-work era peaked in the mid-1980s with a budget of more than $38 million employing some 14,000 social assistance recipients. Commencing in 1992–93, the Employment Opportunities Program began to move away from make-work to programming based on assessment, counselling, career planning, facilitation and support services.

Program Activities

Main Activity

The mission of the department is to develop and implement policies, programs and services to help recipients make the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency. Adult basic education is the main activity to achieve this mission.

Specific Activities

The following activities are covered by the program:

- adult basic education/literacy training. The government tenders with both public and private training institutions for this training.
- second language training. This training is provided in St. John's to a number of new Canadians.
- counselling (through referral to community resources, Gaining Access to Employment, Opportunity Knocks and the Skills Assessment and Training Centre). The Skills Assessment and Training Centre in St. John's provides a case-managed counselling service and offers workshops to recipients on many subjects, including career decision making, prior learning portfolio development, study techniques, time management and stress management.
- high-school completion
- apprenticeship/trades training
- job readiness training. The Gaining Access to Employment (GATE) and Opportunity Knocks programs assist recipients with their job search. The objective of these programs is to provide individuals with the tools necessary for an effective job search and employment. Opportunity Knocks begins with two weeks of training and classroom practice followed by intensive one-on-one counselling one hour a week for four months to assist individuals in securing the job that they want. The program covers such subject matter as dealing with objections, problem solving techniques, marketing skills and

workplace demands. All participants of Opportunity Knocks spend 30 to 35 hours a week job searching. These programs are currently available only in St. John's; consideration is being given to making them available province-wide once the new department is fully functional.

- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience. Included in the program are initiatives in partnership with other government departments, community organizations and the private sector (wage subsidies, work experience, self-employment initiatives, student work and service program).
- self-employment. The South Side Community Development Fund Corporation administers the Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program (EOP). The EOP may provide financial assistance for a maximum of 52 weeks in the form of continued social assistance benefits, incentives and a small start-up loan to qualifying individuals who have a desire to start their own business. To apply for the EOP, the individual must be receiving or be eligible to receive social assistance benefits. For the 52-week period, approved individuals maintain their existing income support benefit, receive an incentive allowance of $175 per month, may be eligible for child care of $260 per month and may be eligible for a repayable loan, to a maximum of $3,000, to cover some of the costs associated with starting a business. Services provided are business plan development, business training, counselling and monitoring. This program is available in St. John's and has a budget of $160,000 annually.
- volunteer activities

Social assistance recipients are not required to take any available job, but there are incentives built into the programs to encourage recipients to work.

Case planning is not a formalized process in Newfoundland except for the co-located sites in Gander and Stephenville and the Skills Assessment and Training Centre in St. John's. When recipients complete one intervention, the onus is on them to approach their worker if they wish to pursue another intervention.

For the most part, activities under STEP are delivered through third parties on behalf of the province. Some of these third parties in St. John's use formal contracts or letters of understanding signed by both the recipient and the worker.

The following programs are open to unemployed and underemployed people in general, not specifically to social assistance recipients, although recipients do use these programs:

- ***Finders-Keepers*** This pilot program of the Community Services Council is designed to assist young post-secondary graduates to gain long-term employment in growth industries through a combination of on-the-job and seminar training. A range of financial incentives are available to participating companies who hire post-secondary graduates and provide specialized training; these incentives are negotiated with the individual employer. Eligible applicants are unemployed or underemployed post-secondary graduates.

- *Linkages* This youth employment initiative recognizes that young people need a supportive environment in order to make the most of their first job. (In Newfoundland social programming, youth are defined as people between the ages of 18 and 30.) Sponsoring community-based agencies offer biweekly individual or group counselling sessions on such topics as preparing for the first day on the job, workplace communications, job maintenance and extended sessions on career planning. Linkages provides a 100% wage subsidy to private and non-profit employers toward the starting salary for the occupation for up to 26 weeks, a maximum subsidy of $5,720 per position and a 15% administrative fee to eligible community-based agencies for monitoring, administering and providing the required employment support. The department contracts with the community-based agencies, which find and monitor the placements.

- *Graduate Employment Program* This program is targeted to graduates of post-secondary training to help facilitate their entry into the workforce by providing a wage subsidy of up to $10,000 over 12 months. Individuals and businesses complete a separate application process; approved applicants are then matched with approved employer placements. Social assistance recipients completing post-secondary training or who have completed post-secondary training in the past 24 months are advised of this program and encouraged to apply.

- *Student Work and Services Program (SWASP)* SWASP is designed to assist students who plan to attend or return to a post-secondary institution within the next year. Students work in career-related placements in their communities while earning salaries and tuition vouchers for future education. Through this program, $4 million, shared 50-50 by the federal and provincial governments, is available to post-secondary students. There are three components of this program:
  - paid work. This component is open to all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador including social assistance recipients. Individuals conduct their own job search for a placement with a private-sector employer. A wage subsidy of $2.25 per hour is provided to the employer for 5 to 18 weeks. At the end of the placement, individuals also receive a tuition voucher based on $50 for each week of employment.
  - community services placement (general stream). This component is open to all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador and is delivered by the Community Services Council. Individuals conduct their own job search for a placement with a non-profit

community-service organization or group. Individuals receive a $50 weekly stipend and, on completion of the eight-week placement, a $1,400 tuition voucher.
- community services placement (social assistance recipients). This program uses the same process and guidelines as for the general stream, but is targeted to recipients. There is no claw-back from a participant's social assistance eligibility.

- *Special Student Program* This provincially funded program is designed to provide employment for high school students to help them prepare for post-secondary education.

- *Goodwill Industries* The facilities of Goodwill Industries were used to help 10 recipients learn to run their own businesses. This one-year, 1997–98 program was available only in St. John's. Funding was provided by HRDC under its Youth Services Canada option.

- *C-STEP* This program is directed toward ex-offenders, most of whom are social assistance recipients. Funding comes from STEP, HRDC and Corrections Canada. It is a cognitive skills training program involving anger management and life skills training. Job placements are available through STEP. It is available in St. John's and Stephenville.

- *Labour Market Development Agreement* On March 24, 1997, a new federal–provincial Labour Market Development Agreement was signed. The employment measures under the agreement are targeted to Employment Insurance (EI) recipients, but there is provision whereby 8,000 to 10,000 social assistance recipients are eligible for services and financial support for training and other employment measures. Recipients are considered to be an eligible participants if all the following conditions are true:
  - they are active EI claimants, or had a benefit period that ended within the previous 36 months, or had a benefit period established within the previous 60 months
  - they were paid parental or maternity benefits under the EI Act or the former Unemployment Insurance Act
  - they subsequently withdrew from the labour force to care for one or more of their newborn children or one or more children placed with them for the purpose of adoption
  - they are seeking to re-enter the labour force

  Newfoundland is the first province to opt for a co-management arrangement under this agreement; at the request of the province, the governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada will share responsibility for the design, management and implementation of labour market development programs and services.

- *Human Resource Development Programs* In the selection of potential candidates for STEP services, people who are EI eligible are referred to Human Resource Centres of Canada for assistance. This may mean motivating the individual to use the services or advocating with HRDC on the recipient's behalf. HRDC offers a variety of programs to enable individuals to obtain employment. HRDC also funds a number of walk-in adult basic education learning centres around the province. The centres are open to social assistance recipients at no cost. HRDC offers a number of youth-oriented programs to assist youth in accessing training and the job market. HRDC usually defines youth as 16- to 26-year-olds.

Training and Educational Activities

Training relates to short-term training courses not covered by the student loan program. Training must be tied to the immediate employment needs of the individual (e.g., the two-day Red Cross lifesaving course or the two-week survival course needed to qualify for work in the offshore marine or oil industry).

Because the student loan program does not normally fund training of eight weeks or less, requests may be received for such courses as truck driver training, heavy equipment operator training or other courses that may not be funded under the student loan program. Each case is considered on its own merit, taking into consideration cost, employment opportunity, mobility (person's willingness to seek employment beyond the local geographic area or out of the province) and, in consultation with HRDC, labour market information and job openings related to specific training.

The objective of the regional skills training of STEP is to provide short-term training to recipients who wish to upgrade current skills or obtain new skills that will enhance employability. Training is not provided for programs that are covered by student loans.

The objective of the adult basic education program is to assist recipients who wish to complete their high school education. Depending on the number of credits required, students may be involved in adult basic education for two weeks to two years.

Employment-Based Activities

Private-sector and non-profit employers participate in the program's employment-based activities.

A broad range of occupations is available to participants. To a large extent, they are entry-level and semi-skilled occupations in the service sector. Full-time, part-time, short-term, seasonal and temporary jobs are available to participants as part of the program. The majority of recipients receive the minimum wage of $5.25 an hour.

Job-finding assistance includes
- identifying job openings
- marketing participants to employers through the wage subsidy program
- arranging interviews for participants

STEP includes measures to build strong links with local employers to help participants gain employment experience and find jobs.

A 32-week wage subsidy is available to employers who hire social assistance recipients. The wage subsidy is in three parts:
- First 12 weeks. Wages and associated benefits are cost shared with the employer 50-50 to the maximum hourly rate of $11.36 an hour. If an employer pays in excess of the maximum hourly rate, the amount in excess is covered by the employer.
- Next 10 weeks. The employer covers the full cost of wages and associated benefits.
- Final 10 weeks. Wages and associated benefits are shared with the employer 50-50.

This wage subsidy program has demonstrated a 60% success rate. The 32-week period allows sufficient time for the employer to provide training and for the employee to adjust to the specific work tasks. The middle 10 weeks without subsidy encourages employer buy-in. The literature on subsidies suggests that the longer the placement, the greater the chance of success. The literature also indicates that there is a higher success rate for programs requiring employer buy-in.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

The Department of Human Resources and Employment took the lead in designing STEP.

Consultations took place with a variety of partners, including various provincial departments and Human Resources Development Canada. A literature search included a review of social assistance recipient agreements across Canada, national and international wage agreements, Canadian Labour Force Development Board reports and programs of other provinces. There was consumer input through focus groups and surveys related to program evaluation and follow-up. There was staff input through a provincial focus group of managers and front-line staff. There were meetings with St. John's regional management and delivery staff and staff of the Skills Assessment and Training Centre. Comments received from individuals and community groups were also incorporated into the review.

A draft document was shared with regional and district managers and appropriate staff, and their feedback was incorporated into the final document.

Responsibility for Implementation

The Department of Human Resources and Employment, program providers and non-profit or community organizations are jointly responsible for implementing the program.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

Programming was designed to allow regions to match services and employment opportunities to local situations. The framework is flexible enough to support the direction taken by each of the regional economic development boards.

Duration of the Program

STEP began in 1996-97, but it is a fourth generation of previous programming that dates back to 1972. With the creation of the new Department of Human Resources and Employment, all Departmental programs are being redesigned, including the income assistance program and STEP. Fiscal year 1997-98 was a transition year during which services continued to be delivered through existing systems. The new program was in place as of April 1, 1998.

STEP comprises a continuum of services. Interventions or supports are delivered in accordance with the need of the recipient. Often, for example, a recipient may take adult basic education training and follow it with a post-secondary placement. Participants do not have to complete the entire program within a specified period and, as a general rule, can go through the program at their own pace.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

Financial assistance is provided to program participants on the basis of their eligibility for general social assistance. The following are provided under STEP:

- wage supplements. Based on the individual's career plan, financial assistance may be provided to support a wage subsidy, a volunteer employment placement, purchase of training, an incentive allowance or any other identified training need. The financial assistance worker or social worker can approve STEP funding on an individual case basis to a maximum of $2,500 in a given 12 months. Amounts exceeding $2,500 to a maximum of $10,000 can be approved by the program supervisor or district manager Requests requiring funding in excess of $10,000 in a given 12 months are referred to departmental headquarters.
- training allowances. A monthly incentive of $175 may be paid to social assistance recipients participating in full-time training or work experience placement. A full-time training program is 30 hours a week or more. This allowance is not available to individuals involved in walk-in adult basic education and individuals in part-time or night-time study programs.

- compensation for job-related or training expenses. Up to $200 per year per recipient, the following items, if not covered under another program, may be covered under the social assistance program to assist recipients in the commencement of employment or training:
  - mandatory licences
  - fees and permits
  - union registration fees
  - professional association fees
  - special clothing
  - tools and other equipment
  - first aid courses
  - CPR courses
  - medicals
  - registration or application fees
  - tuition fees for academic upgrading (adult basic education) or short skills training courses
  - examination or pre-testing required as an entrance requirement to a-post secondary training institution or professional association
- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction
- compensation for child-care expenses
- child care subsidies
- transportation subsidies. Where transportation is a barrier to an individual participating in training (full-time or part-time), transportation assistance can be provided. Compensation for transportation is also available for recipients involved in work placements. The amount of transportation assistance provided in St. John's is an amount equal to the bus fare. Outside St. John's, actual costs of transportation up to a maximum of $25 daily can be provided. These provisions are over and above the incentive allowance of $175 monthly.
- housing subsidies (rental, purchase or repairs). Participation in STEP does not affect a participant's housing subsidy received under the social assistance program.
- moving expenses. No moving assistance is provided to participants even if a job has been secured, but this issue is under review.
- supplemental health care
- dental (emergencies only)

Deadlines and Subsidies

Program participants do not lose access to supplements or subsidies if program deadlines are not met.

Recipients can have additional sources of income and still retain their eligibility for income assistance. The amount of income allowable depends on the recipient's eligibility under the income assistance program. Participants can also retain their drug card.

Child support payments received by program participants affect the amount of financial assistance provided. If child support payments are unpredictable, recipients can continue to receive their full income assistance benefits while the provincial enforcement agency collects the child support payments.

Financial Incentives for Employers

Subsidized employment provides for a 32-week wage subsidy to employers who hire social assistance recipients. The wage subsidy is in three parts, with the employer being reimbursed 50% of wages (maximum wage $11.36 per hour) and associated benefits (EI and Canada Pension Plan premiums) in parts 1 and 3.

Program Funding

Funding is on an annual budget approval basis.

The STEP budget for 1997–98 was approximately $7.3 million; however, through the various partnership arrangements, income support recipients have access to programs funded by other government departments.

During the past six years many positions have been lost from STEP and transferred to the administration of financial assistance. More and more often, financial assistance workers are being asked to administer STEP-related interventions. There are about 300 financial assistance workers and 12 STEP workers in the province. Six years ago, there were 85 workers in the precursor to the STEP program. All 12 positions of today are in St. John's. Outside St. John's, financial assistance workers administer STEP and they do so only if they have time; STEP is not considered a priority.

In 1985–86, when the province was involved in job creation as part of its programming for social assistance recipients, the program budget was $38 million.

Subsidized Child Care

Child care subsidies are available to program participants under general social assistance. Individuals in receipt of income support are eligible for the province's day care subsidy program or can have some of their day care costs covered by the income support program. The child-care subsidy program is officially province-wide, but is limited in the rural areas.

If child care is a barrier to an individual participating in full-time or part-time training, child-care expenses up to $260 per month can be provided through the social assistance program. Children up to the age of 16 can be covered. Child care is not on a per child basis. The $260 per month is regardless of the number of children receiving care. Compensation for child care is also available for people involved in work placements.

Child care coverage is difficult for recipients to get, because the policy is not clear about who can receive it. As a result, the incentive allowance of $175 monthly is often used by recipients to pay for child care.

Recently, money has been budgeted for a day care subsidy for social assistance recipients, particularly single parents. This money is expected to increase the number of child care spaces for recipients.

There are no provisions for children with special needs under the social assistance program, but such provisions do exist under the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Program.

Support for child care is seen as inadequate and is being reviewed. Provincial staff see the following as the central issues in child care:

- limited resources. There is a lack of subsidized seats available in general; often, extended families help in providing child care.
- no licensed day care in the province for children under the age of two
- reimbursement under social assistance is relatively low and is not always available

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

All employable social assistance recipients are eligible for STEP. There is no minimum or maximum length of time during which the recipients must have received social assistance. Recipients who are referred to a program can choose not to pursue it, without sanction.

No groups are targeted on a general basis, but youth and EI reach-back recipients are targeted in an ad hoc manner. The government is concerned about the growing numbers of youth on social assistance. Effective April 1, 1997, young, single, able-bodied recipients who were living with relatives and were between the ages of 18 and 21 began to have their parents' resources taken into account in determining their eligibility for social assistance.

Caseloads

STEP is mandated to serve all employable social assistance recipients in Newfoundland. No employability criteria have been developed, and no tool is used to define employability.

During 1996–97, participation rates were as follows:

- wage subsidies, 86
- training allowances, 1,200
- counselling (Skills Assessment and Training Centre), 800
- job search (Opportunity Knocks, GATE), 160
- self-employment initiative (South Side Community Development Fund), 42
- SWASP, 364
- New Beginnings, 48
- Student loans, 1,100
- forestry project, 282
- other (John Howard, EI, etc.), 248

In total, 4,330 individuals received services under STEP involving a direct expenditure of $6,045,200.

The following types of information are gathered about participants:
demographics

- education and training history
- employment history
- medical–social history
- child-care needs and use
- length of time in receipt of social assistance
- bondability

Because of limited resources, people who are nearest to employment or who can be moved the quickest into employment are dealt with first. In a sense, recipients self-select: Those who are motivated pursue the limited opportunities available. Recipients with low levels of employability may not even know of STEP; these people do not come forward, and therefore resources are not applied to them. Thus, STEP is a passive program in this regard.

Because of the high caseload and limited resources, a strategic selection process is necessary to ensure that individuals with the greatest potential for success are selected. Strategic selection criteria include the following:

- the cost of the intervention
- the potential of the recipient's career plan
- the recipient's duration in receipt of assistance
- the recipient's motivational level
- the recipient's previous attachment to the workforce
- the recipient's current skills and educational level

Although the full range of employment services offered by the department is not readily available on a province-wide basis—particularly for people outside St. John's—partnership arrangements and co-location of services with HRDC are improving accessibility.

Nature of Participation

Participation in the program is voluntary. Recipients are encouraged to participate and retain their social assistance eligibility while participating in interventions under STEP.

Although there is a general provincial policy about the requirement for an employable person to seek and accept available work, there are no sanctions if recipients do not follow this requirement. This inconsistency poses a conundrum. For example, in a recent case, a recipient who refused to work had benefits cancelled; he won an appeal on the grounds of family hardship. As with other departments of social services, the question of what to do with employable recipients who refuse to work remains essentially unanswered.

Orientation and Follow-up

Orientation and follow-up of program participants are improving with the advent of various partnership arrangements and co-location of services with HRDC.

In the greater St. John's area, where 40% of all employable recipients live, weekly orientation sessions about available services are offered by a special unit to interested individuals. Recipients are streamed to the appropriate service after these sessions.

Outside the St. John's area, both orientation and follow-up are sparse. The focus is on the granting of assistance and related eligibility requirements.

A monitoring system is being developed to track program participants.

Appeals Process

An appeals process has been established. Any person who applies for or receives social assistance has the right to have any decision of the financial assistance officer, social worker or program supervisor reviewed or appealed. Any decision of any worker with respect to the granting, refusal, suspension, discontinuation, reduction, resumption or amount of social assistance can be appealed. Recipients and applicants may request an appeal personally or give written consent for an authorized representative to review or appeal on their behalf.

Social assistance recipients can also appeal matters related to their participation in STEP. Recipients are informed about the existence of the appeals process.

The financial assistance officer or social worker ensures that the dissatisfied recipient is given full explanation of the decision. If the recipient requests a review, the financial assistance officer or social worker advises the recipient in writing about the basis for the decision to refuse or suspend assistance or to deny a request for special needs. The letter provides the address of the service review committee, noting the 60-day time limit for the review process. If the request from the recipient is in writing, the response is also in writing.

Each of the department's five regions has a service review committee consisting of the regional manager, two departmental workers and the regional manager's secretary. As requested, the committee reviews any decisions made by the program supervisor or district manager of that region. Within two days of the meeting, the secretary of the service review committee advises the recipient of the committee's decision and the recipient's right to appeal in writing to the Social Services Appeal Board within 30 days of the date of notification.

The Social Services Appeal Board is an independent body of three people who are not employed by the department and who are appointed by the provincial government. The board travels to major centres of the province as required to hear appeals. A written notice of decision is issued to the recipient within one week. If the recipient does not agree with the board's decision, the matter can be taken to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

Officially, STEP is applicable province-wide; however, the full range of employment services is not readily available everywhere in the province. Through partnership arrangements and co-location of services with HRDC, accessibility is improving.

The following provincial conditions were taken into account in designing the program:

- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities
- employment trends
- unemployment rates
- changes to the Employment Insurance regulations

Programs are designed in keeping with the province's strategic economic plan. Partnership with labour market partners has brought that perspective to the table, and attempts are made to target human resource development initiatives to areas of economic growth.

Newfoundland is in the midst of profound social and economic change caused by technological and demographic forces, global and world conditions, changes to federal government policy, an underdeveloped economy, the failure of the northern cod fishery and provincial economic imperatives. It was the only province to record a population decline in 1995 and 1996. The most significant declines have occurred in rural areas. Many fisheries workers who are unemployed because of the failure of the cod fishery have chosen to remain in the province. Many well-educated people are leaving the province in record numbers. Emigration of youth is increasing. This emigration, combined with the fact that those who remain behind are living longer, means that the average age of the province's population is increasing.

The demand for social assistance increased from less than 20,000 cases per month in 1989 to more than 35,000 monthly in 1996. Annually, the number of cases increased from 48,240 in 1992 to 52,550 in 1995. This equates to approximately 100,000 people living in 50,000 households relying on social assistance at some point during the year. An analysis of the data shows that more than 50% of the people on social assistance are now under 25 years of age.

Nearly half of Newfoundland and Labrador's population aged 15 and over has less than a high school education.

The following employment-related design considerations were taken into account in designing the program:

- a match between participant skills and employer needs. The program was designed to ensure that the local job openings and skills requirements matched the skills that program participants had or would develop during the program.
- the unemployment rates of both Newfoundland as a whole and specific regions of the province
- economic restructuring. The moratorium on cod fishing was taken into account. The average TAG recipient (i.e., the Atlantic Groundfish recipient, or fisher) is less educated than the average social assistance recipient. The academic upgrading provided to the TAG recipient by HRDC is followed closely by more academic upgrading by the

province when a TAG recipient becomes a social assistance recipient. The province picks up where the federal government leaves off.

There have been positive and negative changes in the economy since the program was introduced. On the positive side there has been a discovery at Voisey's Bay, and the Inco smelter has started. On the negative side, the Hibernia oil project has finished. The economy has seen a series of booms and busts.

Employment Equity and Displacement

For the most part, services in the province are delivered in accordance with individual need and are not based on membership in a particular group. Nonetheless, STEP does take the specific needs of single parents, youth and aboriginal Canadians.

No consideration was given to promoting well-paid jobs for women in particular; however, the program has worked with groups such as Women Interested in Employment (WISE) to encourage women to complete high school. Funding has been provided to WISE through the department.

The program attempts to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding jobs in the local economy, but a minimal amount of displacement does occur. Provincial officials believe that unless a wage subsidy is used, some social assistance recipients will never become employed. The department will not continue to contract with an employer who knowingly displaces workers in the local economy.

Community Services

Single-Window Access

One of the driving forces behind the creation of the new Department of Human Resources and Employment was the desire to harmonize income support programming with overall labour market strategies in the province. Much of the department's work is in partnership with other organizations and governments to avoid duplication and to get maximum impact for dollars spent.

Co-location in Gander and Stephenville (in the federal–provincial Human Resource Centres) represents an attempt to avoid duplication.

Community Diversity

The following demographics of social assistance recipients were taken into account when designing the program:

- age
- sex
- family composition (type of family)
- family size
- rural or urban
- disability status (to a limited extent)

More intensive services were provided in St. John's.

A general need for academic upgrading was identified for many recipients. Consequently, in 1996–97, $4 million from a total program budget of $7.3 million was directed toward academic upgrading. This upgrading helped to bring social assistance recipients up to the same qualification level of other unemployed people in the province looking for work.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

Generally, with the exception of the recently completed strategic initiative and some projects under the social assistance recipient agreement, there has been little evaluation of social assistance programming. STEP is not being evaluated, nor is there any budget for evaluation. If there is money left over from a program budget, which is rare, evaluation may occur.

It is expected that more emphasis will be placed on program evaluation as current programs are redesigned. The preliminary design of the new STEP incorporates an evaluation process. The partnership arrangements with other government departments have strengthened the support for this process.

Some of the program pieces have been monitored informally, for example, the Skills Assessment and Training Centre.

Outcome Data

Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance. At times, this type of data is collected on individual program elements or interventions, but not on the overall STEP.
- the number of participants who get jobs (limited, as above)
- the nature of jobs obtained by program participants (limited, as above)
- the types of occupations obtained by participants (limited, as above)

Participant Evaluation
A participant's continued interest in and satisfaction with the program are not evaluated. Their continued performance in the program is evaluated by attendance checks. Also, progress reports are received from the third parties providing the service.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

In the 1997-98 budget, the government of Newfoundland announced the establishment of two new departments—Health and Community Services and Human Resources and Employment—to replace the former Department of Social Services. These departments began to function separately on April 1, 1998.

During the intervening year, ongoing services were organized under one or the other department, and the movement of staff and programs was planned and implemented. At the same time, work teams developed frameworks for the programs and services the Department of Human Resources and Employment began delivering on April 1, 1998 and would deliver in the future. Programs are now being designed or redesigned based on those frameworks.

In light of the complexity of issues, the growth in information technology and the need for a new income support program, it is estimated that it will be April 1, 2001, before programs are fully functional. For 1998-99, STEP has been amalgamated with other labour market programs. Nonetheless, STEP delivery will continue to target social assistance recipients, and other labour market programs will offer opportunities for social assistance recipients but serve the general population. As program development occurs, there will be opportunities for pilots leading to a full implementation of programs by 2001-2.

Contacts

NAME: David Lewis
TITLE: Director of Income Support
ADDRESS: Department of Human Resources and Employment
PO Box 8700
3rd Floor, Confederation Building, West Block
St. John's, NF
A1B 4J6
TELEPHONE: (709) 729-2665
E-MAIL:
FAX: (709) 729-0583

NAME: Terrence Stapleton
TITLE: Manager, Income Support Program
ADDRESS: Department of Human Resources and Employment
PO Box 8700
3rd Floor, Confederation Building, West Block
St. John's, NF
A1B 4J6
TELEPHONE: (709) 729-5184
E-MAIL: tstapleton@doss.gov.nf.ca
FAX: (709) 729-0583

Primary Information Sources

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- Pamphlet, "Before Opportunity Knocks"
- Pamphlet, "Gaining Access to Employment (GATE)"
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- Material about the Skills Assessment and Training (SAT) centre
- *The Employment Resource Centre: A new direction for the SAT centre*
- Material about Finders-Keepers
- Self-employment assistance program for social assistance recipients
- Fax from Terry Stapleton relating Newfoundland/Labrador work to welfare program information to the themes of the inventory, December 17, 1996
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- *Employment Opportunities Program: New Beginnings,* 1994-95 and 1995-96
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- Formative evaluation of the strategic employment opportunities program
- Formative evaluation of the graduate employment/self-employment program
- Evaluation recommendations: Graduate employment/self-employment program
- Budget, Finders-Keepers
- "The Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program", (pamphlet)
- Participation in STEP 1996–97
- Supports to Employment Program
- Student Works and Services Program (SWASP) (a one-page description)

Index of Acronyms

EI	Employment Insurance
EOP	Entrepreneurial Opportunities Program
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
STEP	Supports to Employment Program
SWASP	Student Work and Services Program

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Summary

The Employment Enhancement Program (EEP) and Job Creation Program (JCP) are sub-programs of PEI's Welfare Assistance Program and are available to residents throughout the province. Their primary focus is job creation with the private sector; however, placements are also made in both municipal and provincial governments, as well as with non-profit groups.

The EEP is designed to assist social assistance recipients by providing work and training opportunities that help remove barriers to employment. The JCP is aimed at assisting recipients to retain or learn new work skills through short-term employment as they move toward independence. In particular, the JCP provides an opportunity for clients to develop or re-learn work skills. PEI has five regional health authorities where staff deliver both programs. This provides a continuum of services focused on the needs of the client, rather than on the needs of the employer.

Initially, EEP and JCP were targeted to the heads of large families in order to effect the maximum possible reduction in welfare assistance payments. Now, however, all employable social assistance clients must participate in the programs. Within reason, participants can go through the programs at their own pace. There is a contractual understanding with each client and there are sanctions for non-compliance. Benefits are not provided for applicants who choose to leave their employment in order to qualify for social assistance or without regard for their ability to be self-supporting. Participants always have the right to appeal a decision to an independently appointed body.

Some clients with severe alcohol or mental problems are deemed to be unemployable. As well, when certain services stipulated by the programs cannot be provided, a participant can leave the programs without being penalized.

There is local autonomy in the design and implementation of the programs. Programs do not have regulations or policy manuals and they are seen by administrators as flexible and responsive to local needs. The program design takes into account the specific needs of women (some projects are geared to women as they re-enter the workforce), single parents, people with a disability and youth. While some projects are aimed at women, nothing has been developed to promote well-paid jobs specifically for women. The objective of the programs is to promote well-paid jobs for all clients.

The programs were designed to ensure that participants do not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy.

The budget for 1996–97 was $38.845 million including EEP/JCP expenditures; total EEP/JCP expenditures for 1995–96 were $1.888 million. Spending for 1997–98 is forecast at $2.283 million. In 1993–94, there were 6,400 clients in receipt of social assistance; in 1996–97, there were 5,400, with about half of these considered to be employable. In 1995–96, 3,336 clients participated in EEP and JCP.

Group orientation sessions sometimes precede individual employability assessments, which usually take about one to one-and-a-half hours. The orientation sessions are held in the work sites of the regional health authorities. During individual intake, participants are informed about the objectives and requirements of the programs. Assistance and follow-up varies from one region to the next, but the province plans to place more emphasis on this aspect of the programs.

There is no formal evaluation tool for these programs, but a limited number of statistics on the programs are being collected, including participants' participation and performance. Findings to date have identified increasing numbers of single parents and of young, single employable males in receipt of social assistance.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Programs

Employment Enhancement Program (EEP), Job Creation Program (JCP)

Description

The EEP and JCP are sub-programs of PEI's Welfare Assistance Program and are available to residents throughout the province. Their primary focus is job creation with the private sector; however, placements are also made in both municipal and provincial governments, as well as with non-profit groups. In practice, the two programs have become one program and are viewed as such by the staff and participants.

Services offered include financial assistance, employment assessment, job creation, aptitude and interest testing, employment counselling, on-the-job training, and job search workshops. The EEP is designed to assist social assistance recipients by providing work and training opportunities that help remove barriers to employment. The JCP is aimed at assisting social assistance recipients retain or learn new work skills through short-term employment as they move toward independence. In particular, the JCP provides an opportunity for participants to develop or re-learn work skills.

PEI has five Regional Health Authorities where staff deliver both programs. This provides a continuum of services focussed on the needs of the recipient, rather than on the needs of the employer.

Goals

The Programs have the following goals:

- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment. The philosophy of the programs became employment for everyone, rather than financial assistance for everyone.
- develop the short-term work skills of program participants
- make employment more attractive financially than social assistance
- promote lasting connections to the labour market
- reduce the rate at which people leave employment and return to social assistance
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance. The province is providing more services at the front end, to lessen the need for long-term assistance.

- reduce poverty
- contribute to job creation
- promote economic development in the province
- improve fraud detection
- remove barriers to employment
- provide opportunities to develop or re-learn work skills.

Objectives
The purpose of the programs is to assist people in finding work, thereby eliminating their need for financial assistance or reducing the amount of financial assistance they require. Guiding principles of the EEP and JCP are that

- work is important
- learning is lifelong
- all activities should promote the self-sufficiency of participants.

Program Rationale
Both programs were originally developed in the early 1980s as a thinly veiled attempt at the policy level to "upload" welfare assistance recipients into the federal Unemployment Insurance system. In 1994, PEI instituted health and social assistance reforms designed to support the communities' efforts to promote, protect and enhance the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being of their population, within the resources available to the community.

PEI recognized that it had to take a more active role in health promotion and illness prevention. If significant gains were to be made in improving population health status, then opportunities had to be pursued to find meaningful employment, improve income levels and develop self-sufficiency for their Financial Assistance clients.

The province developed specific strategies, including the following:

- Enhanced employment strategies to ensure better placement and training for clients to assist them to leave the system as quickly as possible.
- New educational approaches to provide learning in ways that better matched the client's needs. This includes alternate service delivery models such as learning centres, co-location of services and partnerships with the federal government, provincial government and the private sector.
- Initiatives to obtain a more effective computerized, case management system to reduce the cost of administrative processes and improve the quality of services to clients.
- A provincial Maintenance Enforcement Pilot Project to recover delinquent support payments for children and spouses.
- Administrative changes to allow better management and less abuse of the programs. These include expanding data matches, enhanced audit, verification and investigations,

> and insurance recoveries. With the advent of the five Regional Health Authorities, there are five differing perspectives on EEP and JCP – ranging from a high "personal development" approach focussing on long-term planning, education and skill building, to a "quick hit" or minimum investment and fast connection to the labour force, that is, an approach where any work is good work.

Reform in general, and the move to an agency and five regions in particular, were driven by the goal of efficiency, to some extent. The amalgamation of health services within a region was viewed as contributing to cross-sectoral cooperation, resulting in the more efficient and effective use of resources. The changes have generated some savings.

History

Prior to 1994, the provision of benefits was the overriding thrust of the Welfare Assistance Program. With the proclamation of the new Health and Community Services Act in 1994, the employment of individuals has gained equal prominence with the provision of benefits.

With the election of a new government in November 1996, more changes in welfare administration were implemented, and control of welfare services was centralized at the provincial level. In the spring of 1997, the government introduced legislation to give the Minister the authority to make changes in the number and sizes of the health regions (there are currently five). To date, no changes have been made in this regard.

Program Activities

Main Activity

The main activity of the programs is to get participants employed, often through the use of wage subsidies with private sector employers. As appropriate, and depending on the participant's level of employability, activities also involve increasing the level of employability.

Specific Activities

The following activities are covered by the programs:

- adult basic education/literacy training
- life skills training, but this type of activity is decreasing. The life skills training is also changing from a focus, for example, on personal hygiene to a focus on learning to take responsibility for oneself.
- parenting classes
- counselling for
  - job stress
  - family stress
  - family violence, with referrals to community resources, as appropriate

  - stress of balancing employment and family conflicts
  - stress of balancing school and family conflicts
  - substance abuse, with referrals to community resources, as appropriate
  - job maintenance
  - self-confidence
- high-school completion
- post-secondary education
  - university, but the province is moving away from this.
  - college
  - apprenticeship/trades
- job readiness training
  - counselling
  - job search training
  - career planning
  - job referrals
  - job maintenance
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience
- self-employment. While Section 4-8 of the Welfare Policy Manual deals with self-employment, there is no formal policy framework to encourage this type of activity.
- volunteer activities. These are encouraged.
- employability assessments. While many employability assessments are undertaken through EEP and JCP, from time to time and as appropriate, participants are referred to HRDC for more thorough assessments. These assessments often involve the expertise of Holland College.

During the assessment period, staff assess the participants as having one of the following:

- ***Low Support Needs*** Individuals have had a recent attachment to the workforce, a history of good work habits, marketable skills, a general awareness of their abilities and limitations, and they display confidence and motivation. The only barrier at this level is the lack of a job opportunity. For an individual with low support needs, the worker ensures that the participant is informed of all sources of potential job opportunities. Referrals are made to JCP/EEP workers to assist in identifying resources.

- ***Moderate Support Needs*** Individuals have one or more of the following characteristics: distant attachment to the workforce; sufficient education/training but lack of work experience; lack of job search skills or discouragement with the job search; lack of confidence and motivation; inability to present himself/herself well; and lack of social skills. For an individual with moderate support needs, the worker helps the participant to develop a case plan to overcome employment barriers. Existing resources which may be used include HRDC for courses to assist the participant in gaining appropriate social skills and self-confidence. Referrals are made to JCP/EEP workers for assessment and "service needs determination" to identify how to assist the individual in becoming more employable.

- *High Support Needs* Individuals have one or more of the following characteristics: lack of education/training; little or no work experience; poor work habits; no marketable skills; lack of motivation; history of dependency on financial assistance; lack of confidence; poor presentation; physical, medical, or familial barriers; and very poor relationship/social skills. For an individual with high support needs, the JCP/EEP worker thoroughly assesses the participant's situation and begins an extensive employment preparation case plan to assist the participant to move to a more independent level of functioning.

Training and Educational Activities

The main thrust is on-the-job training, often involving the use of wage subsidies with employers. Training or educational activities have been developed specifically for these programs. Examples include upgrading and literacy programs developed specifically for social assistance recipients. The province is attempting to promote the notion of lifelong learning.

Employment-Based Activities

Depending on the region, employment programming ranges from getting people to work and thus eligible for EI benefits, to keeping individuals employed by aggressively pursuing any and all types of work for the participants. Over the past two years, more attention has been paid to assessments of employability. People are no longer labelled as "unemployable," rather assessments focus on determining which barriers are preventing employment and what interventions are required to overcome these obstacles.

A participant's employability is determined through a service needs assessment process, and single parents are not automatically considered to be unemployable based on their children's age(s). In practice, however, guidelines similar to those governing EI eligibility are used for all mothers, that is, they are not required to search for employment until six months after the birth of their child.

All types of occupations are available to participants in the programs. The jobs available range from full-time to part-time, short-term to long-term, and temporary to permanent; some have flexible work arrangements. For the most part, entry level jobs requiring a wide range of skill levels are available to participants, with pay levels of about $6.00 an hour, i.e., no less than the minimum wage.

The programs provide assistance in finding jobs such as identifying job openings, marketing participants to employers, arranging interviews for participants, and conducting interviews on behalf of employers.

Also included in the programs are measures to build strong links with local employers to help participants gain employment experience and find jobs. The quality of workers has improved in terms of their skills, experiences and their fit with employers' needs. Relationships with employers are improving as more time is spent matching participants with the needs of employers. Increasingly, employers involved in the programs are seeking the worker and not the subsidy.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

The province – through the Departments of Health and Social Services, Education and Economic Development, and Tourism – was responsible for designing the programs, in consultation with the following groups:

- program providers, the Regional Health Authorities
- welfare agencies
- non-profit and community organizations
- social assistance recipients
- academics
- the private sector

Responsibility for Implementation

The five Regional Health Authorities and non-profit or community organizations are responsible for implementing the programs.

In some of the regions, program workers have integrated functions, that is, their duties relate to financial assistance as well as the administration of the EEP and JCP. The province's aim is to have all workers with integrated functions in the next year. Many workers are integrated or co-located with HRDC staff.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

There is local autonomy or flexibility in the design and implementation of the programs. Programs do not have regulations or policy manuals, and they are seen by administrators as flexible and responsive to local needs.

Duration of the Program

EEP/JCP are ongoing programs. Within reason, participants can go through the programs at their own pace. There is a contractual understanding with each participant and there are sanctions for non-compliance.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

Financial assistance is provided to program participants on the basis of their eligibility for general social assistance. The following assistance is provided:

- wage supplements to employers
- training allowances
- compensation for job-related expenses. The Director may grant assistance, up to $100 in value, to pay for special clothing, mandatory licenses, fees or permits, and essential tools, where necessary to enable an applicant or beneficiary to commence employment and where the applicant or beneficiary is unable to provide such items.
- exemption from benefit reduction of a portion of employment earnings: exemptions of $50 per month for single individuals plus 10% of the remainder of their income, and $100 per month for families plus 10% of the remainder of their income
- removal of the limit on the number of hours that recipients are allowed to engage in paid work. There is no maximum.
- compensation for child-care expenses
- child care subsidies, subsidized day care
- transportation subsidies. The Director may grant assistance for transportation and relocation expenses when an allowance for such expenses is not included in any other assistance being granted to the applicant or beneficiary.
- moving expenses (see Transportation subsidies, above)
- supplemental health care
- dental care
- optical services to provide essential eye care, to a maximum of $42 for an optical assessment, a maximum of $115 for single vision lenses and frames, and a maximum of $145 for bifocal lenses and frames
- prosthetic devices

The Director may grant assistance to an applicant or beneficiary for special needs as described in this section, but where the value of this assistance is expected to exceed $1,000 over the fiscal year, the approval of the Deputy Minister must be obtained.

Deadlines and Subsidies

To reduce the immediate hardship that may be associated with starting employment or employment-related training, income received in the month in which the training or employment commenced is deferred as income for the next month.

Participants can have additional sources of income and still remain in the programs, including income from the following:

- GST rebate
- Child Tax Credit
- income of dependent children in school
- casual earnings up to $50 per month
- some exemptions for those who are self-employed

If the participant's income, whether through EEP/JCP or not, does not cover their basic needs, it will be supplemented. There are many participants who work full-time and continue to be subsidized through social assistance because their wages are less than their basic needs.

Program participants' child support payments affect the amount of financial assistance they receive, however, the lack of predictability of child support payments is taken into account. As part of the Maintenance Enforcement Program, participants who receive court-ordered child support payments only sporadically sign an Assignment of Benefits Form. As a result, they receive social assistance, and the province assumes responsibility for collecting the child support payments owed.

Financial Incentives for Employers

The programs offer, if necessary, wage subsidies for employers to provide program participants with work experience and training. The following are guidelines for the amount of subsidies offered:

- on the job training with employers: 75% subsidy to a maximum of $4.50 per hour
- 100% subsidy or $6 per hour to non-profit organizations for job creation
- 50% or a maximum of $3 per hour for private sector job creation

Because these are guidelines only, the amounts can be exceeded or reduced at the discretion of field staff.

Program Funding

The budget for 1996-97 was $38.845 million including EEP/JCP expenditures; total EEP/JCP expenditures for 1995-96 were $1.888 million. Spending for 1997-98 is forecast at $2.283 million. As indicated in the provincial budget, the overall health budget, including social services, will be reduced by .05%.

Funding can be increased or decreased for the following reasons:

- the economic climate changes
- the needs of the Region change

During the past three years, the welfare assistance budget has steadily decreased, but increased funding for the EEP/JCP has been reallocated from welfare assistance to these programs. There have been recent increases in staffing.

The following factors were taken into account in determining the overall budget for the programs:

- estimated take-up
- an assessment of past performance
- an examination of trends
- an assessment of economic growth

Subsidized Child Care

There are child care subsidies available to program participants under the general welfare assistance program. Participants can receive up to $17 per day per child, and for private day care, up to $80 per week for one child and $120 per week for two children.

There is no limit on the age and number of children covered; child care is covered until the children are deemed to be able to care for themselves. There are provisions for children with disabilities and children with other special needs. This assistance is provided through the Subsidized Child Care Program or, in the case of children with disabilities, the Family Support Program. The supply of child care spaces is sufficient to meet the needs of program participants.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

Initially, EEP and JCP were targeted to the heads of large families, in order to effect the maximum possible reduction in welfare assistance payments, that is, to reduce welfare expenditures. Now, however, all social assistance recipients are eligible for the programs and must participate.

There is a general targeting of the programs to individuals who have a recent attachment to the workforce, a history of good work habits, marketable skills, an awareness of their abilities and limitations, and display confidence and motivation – that is, to individuals with low support needs who generally have a higher success rate in finding and maintaining employment. There are no specific programs for particular groups of participants.

A fixed residency period is not required for program eligibility. However, persons with no established residence are considered to be transient and they may be provided with emergency assistance limited to a meal, overnight lodging in a hostel, or transportation out of the province.

To maintain eligibility for benefits, persons receiving social assistance are required to meet the following criteria:

- accept employment when reasonable opportunities arise, or undergo training or treatment or both if necessary, to improve or restore their capacity to support themselves and their dependants.
- accept reasonable employment or training offered by the Department so that they can support or improve their capacity to support themselves and their dependants.
- in the case of a minor over age 15 on whose behalf assistance is paid, to attend school or accept employment leading towards self-support, unless there is a valid reason, acceptable to the Director, for not doing so.

Caseloads

In 1993-94, there were 6,400 people in receipt of social assistance; in 1996-97, there were 5,400, with about half of these considered to be employable. Reasons for the decrease in caseloads included the following:

- an improving economy
- a different style or philosophy of delivery. Formerly, for example, it was thought to be unfair to force welfare recipients to work for the minimum wage; now, all work is believed to be meaningful.
- the development of a more efficient delivery system. For example, the system now enables the province to identify "double dippers."

In 1995-96, 3,336 individuals participated in EEP and JCP. All employable clients participate in the programs.

The types of information gathered about program participants include the following:

- demographic data
- education and training history
- employment history
- medical-social history
- child care needs and uses

- length of time in receipt of social assistance
- amount of monthly benefits
- barriers to employment such as those related to bonding and transportation

Accessibility

All social assistance recipients are interviewed and their service needs are determined in order to assess their employability. All those who are considered to be employable must participate in the program. People with low support needs tend to have higher success rates in finding and maintaining employment. Most of the participants are considered to have moderate support needs. People thought to be difficult or expensive to serve are not excluded from the program.

Nature of Participation

The unemployment rate in PEI is about 16%. People are motivated to accept any available training or employment placements, and there has been little difficulty getting individuals to accept the programs. Benefits are not provided to applicants if they decide to leave their employment in order to qualify for social assistance or without regard for their ability to be self-supporting. Participation in the programs is mandatory for all employable social assistance recipients.

In rare instances, some individuals with severe alcohol or mental problems are deemed to be unemployable. As well, when certain services stipulated by the programs cannot be provided, a participant can leave the programs without being penalized. An example would be someone requiring child care, who lived in a rural or isolated area and the job required them to work at night. Parent are not automatically considered to be either employable or unemployable based on the age of their children. In practice, however, guidelines similar to those governing Employment Insurance are used for mothers, that is, they are not required to search for work until six months after the birth of their child.

Participants always have the right to appeal a decision to an independently appointed body.

Orientation and Follow-up

Generally, intake assessments for financial assistance and employability are done simultaneously. Sometimes group information sessions precede individual employability assessments, which usually take about one to one and a half hours. The orientation sessions are held in the work sites of the Regional Health Authorities.

During intake, participants are informed about the objectives of the programs. Prior to beginning the application process, the worker clearly explains the program requirements.

Assistance and follow-up varies from one region to the next. The province believes that this is an important element of the service, and more emphasis is being placed on this aspect of the service.

Appeals Process

Participants can appeal any matter pertaining to any aspect of the social assistance program, including their involvement in the EEP/JCP. There were just over 100 appeals last year.

Applicants or beneficiaries may request a hearing before the Appeals Board for the following reasons:

- they were not allowed to apply or reapply.
- their application for assistance was denied.
- the amount of assistance was cancelled, suspended, adjusted or withheld on grounds which are inconsistent with these regulations.
- the amount of assistance granted was inconsistent with these regulations.

Recipients are notified in writing about the appeal process when eligibility is determined. The Appeals Board consists of not less than seven members who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Appointments are for a maximum of three years. Members may be reappointed. Members appointed to the Board have relevant experience in human services, and at least one member on the Board is a current recipient of welfare assistance.

In response to an appeal, the Board can

- dismiss the appeal.
- dismiss the appeal and order that the assistance be revoked or discontinued.
- allow the appeal and vary the order or direction made by the Director, but the Board cannot render a decision which results in a payment or award to the appellant that exceeds the amount specified in the regulations or approved departmental policies.

When a person appeals a decision to reduce, suspend or terminate their assistance, the assistance continues to be paid at the amount authorized as emergency assistance until such time as the Board submits its findings to the Director. When a person appeals a decision that refused to grant them assistance, no assistance is paid until the Board renders a decision on the appeal.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

While the programs are available province-wide, perspectives on the EEP/JCP differ from one region to the next, due to different labour market conditions and differing community needs. The following provincial and regional economic conditions were taken into account in designing the programs:

- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities
- employment trends
- unemployment rates

The employment profile of each region was also taken into account when designing the programs. Resource-based industries, such as agriculture and fishing, and the service industry, including retail sales, clerical work, and unskilled and semi-skilled labour, predominate in PEI.

Most jobs are not full-time; if they are full-time jobs, it is usually seasonal work. Fifty per cent of participants who become employed get full-time/seasonal jobs. Most participants are employed at the minimum wage of $5.15 per hour. This was raised to $5.40 per hour in September 1997.

The following considerations were part of the design of the programs:

- ensure that local job openings and skill requirements match the skills that program participants had or would develop during the programs.
- ensure that future local employment requirements were part of the program design.
- the unemployment rate of the geographic areas.
- the social assistance rate of the geographic areas. It was recognized that in order to provide an incentive, individuals must earn more from their employment than they would receive on social assistance.

Employment Equity and Displacement

The program design takes into account the specific needs of the following groups:

- women – Some projects are geared to women as they reenter the workforce.
- single parents
- disabled persons, but not to the same extent as women.
- youth – One project focussed on providing summer employment for children of long-term social assistance recipients.

While some projects are aimed at women, nothing has been developed to promote well-paid jobs specifically for women. The objective of the programs is to promote well-paid jobs for all participants.

The programs were designed to ensure that participants do not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy. Brochures provided to prospective employers state this, and before Regional Health Authorities consider placing an individual with an employer, the employer must declare that they will not displace paid workers. In the rare cases where this does occur, that particular employer is not used again. The displacement of volunteers in the unpaid economy is not considered to be an issue in the province.

While the full impact of recent federal changes to the EI program has yet to be determined, data so far indicate that the changes have resulted in people applying for welfare sooner and staying on social assistance longer. There is more tracking by welfare staff now to ensure that individuals qualify for EI through EEP/JCP placements.

Community Services

Integration of Community Resources

There are many community-based resources available that help support these programs, including counselling services, mental health and addiction services, family resource centres, and services provided by the Salvation Army. There are also community resources available to meet the needs of particular groups of participants, for example, resources for victims of spousal abuse, such as transition houses that offer shelter for women fleeing domestic violence, rape crisis centres, and self-help groups.

Single-Window Access

The province is working to ensure that there is no duplication of services in order to avoid confusion for program participants. Officials are examining the benefits of integrated services or "single-window" access, and the concept is under development. Co-location of the programs with HRDC offices is already occurring across the province.

Community Diversity

While the demographic characteristics of social assistance recipients were not specifically taken into account when designing the programs, the programs are designed to have the flexibility to respond to each participant's differing needs. The establishment of the five Regional Health Authorities promotes this flexibility.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

There is no formal evaluation tool for these programs, but a limited number of statistics on the programs are collected. Systems are being established to track participants and collect data province-wide. The provincial government, through the Department of Health and Community Services, is responsible for the overall analysis of the data.

A labour force development agreement was signed on April 26, 1997 with HRDC. It is expected that some aspects of the programs will be evaluated as a result of this agreement. The essence of the agreement is as follows:

- It is based on a co-management principle and on cooperation.
- In the first five years of the agreement, the federal government will spend $107 million from the EI account to support active employment measures.
- Both parties will work together to design and tailor labour market employment programs to meet the needs of communities, employers and the unemployed. The federal government will retain responsibility for EI-related active measures, as well as the National Employment Service.

No budget has been set aside for program evaluation at this time.

Cost-Benefit Research

It is expected that a cost-benefit analysis of these programs will be part of the program evaluation. Cost-benefit information currently being collected includes the following:

- increases/decreases in caseloads
- numbers of placements
- caseload numbers
- duration on assistance
- frequency of re-application

Monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits are being measured ad hoc in some regions.

Outcome Data

Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the total number of participants who leave social assistance
- the total number of participants who get jobs
- the extent to which program participants retain the jobs they get
- the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare
- the nature of the jobs obtained by program participants
    - full-time

  - part-time
  - short-term
  - long-term
  - seasonal
  - reoccurring seasonal
  - contract
  - temporary
- the types of occupations obtained by program participants
- employment earnings
- family income
- EI eligibility

Participant Evaluation
While the participants' participation and performance in the programs are evaluated, their interest is not. Information about the types of programs most suitable to specific groups of participants is not captured.

Evaluation Findings
Based on the data collected to date, the province is particularly concerned about the following:

- the increasing number of young, single employable males in receipt of social assistance.
- the increasing number of single parents in receipt of social assistance.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

There have been no new developments since the information outlined in this Inventory was collected.

Contacts

NAME: Will MacDonald
TITLE: Director of Welfare Assistance
ADDRESS: Department of Health and Social Services
16 Garfield Street
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PEI
C1A 7N8
E-MAIL:
TELEPHONE: (902) 368-6519
FAX: (902) 368- 6156

Primary Information Sources

- Interviews with PEI officials, May 13 and 14, 1997
- Welfare Assistance Act, Laws of Prince Edward Island
- Regulations, Laws of Prince Edward Island
- Fax from Gail Murphy, dated November 6, 1996, about the Employment Enhancement and Job Creation Programs
- Fax from Will MacDonald, dated December 2, 1996, with additional comments on the Employment Enhancement and Job Creation Programs
- Letter from Gail Murphy to the Canadian Policy Research Network, dated August 14, 1996
- *Monitoring the Impacts on Social Assistance Recipients of Welfare Cuts and Changes: An Overview*, a report from the National Anti-Poverty Organization, dated October 17, 1996
- *Monitoring the Impacts on Social Assistance Recipients of Welfare Cuts and Changes: An Update*, dated March 21, 1997
- Welfare assistance policies, fax from Gail Murphy, May 5, 1997
- News release dated April 26, 1997, Canada and PEI sign labour market development agreement
- The provincial budget speech, April 8, 1997 and the 1997 provincial budget highlights
- Memorandum to file from Alan Toombs regarding EEP and JCP, dated April 24, 1995
- Cost analysis of job creation, January 27, 1997 by Olive Crane
- Principles/value statements of health reform
- Core services for PEI's health and community services, June 1994
- Health and community services system provincial plan, June 1995
- 1995/96 EEP/JCP statistics
- Welfare assistance policy regarding self-employment
- Welfare assistance policy regarding transient persons
- Data regarding social assistance recipients
- Agreement between the PEI Department of Health and Social Services and social assistance joint applicants/recipients

Index of Acronyms

EEP - Employment Enhancement Program
JCP - Job Creation Program

NOVA SCOTIA

Summary

Employment Support Services (ESS) is part of the Income and Employment Support Services Division and is administered by the Department of Community Services.

ESS is responsible for the development of employment-related initiatives for individuals in receipt of municipal and provincial social assistance throughout the province. The objective of ESS programming is to support social assistance recipients in moving from welfare to work by promoting self-sufficiency and enabling access to upgrading, training programs and job opportunities. ESS provides services to the extent necessary to enable recipients to gain entry-level employment in the shortest possible time through the least expensive means. Sub-programs include Career Planning for Single Parents, Employment Resource Centres, Work Activity Projects, Compass and Bridging to Success.

ESS is provided to income assistance recipients who have an identified need based on a comprehensive assessment by an income assistance worker. The required services are identified as Stream I to Stream IV: Stream I services are for individuals who are job ready or close to job ready; Stream II services are for individuals requiring career counselling and training before seeking entry-level employment; Stream III recipients have the potential to be employable, but currently have major barriers to training and labour force participation; Stream IV recipients are indefinitely unemployable or require long-term treatment interventions. People in Stream IV are likely to be severely disabled or aged or have life circumstances that impede their participation in employment services. No policy defines how long recipients can remain in particular streams. The streams are fluid, as the province is attempting to get away from a categorical base.

Participation in ESS is mandatory for social assistance recipients. Applicants aged 16 to 19 are not eligible. Social assistance may not be granted or continued to people who refuse to accept employment that is within their capability, an approved upgrading or training program or a job readiness process. Applicants and recipients have the right to appeal decisions on any matter relating to their entitlement to benefits. Non-participation in ESS may be accepted in exceptional cases – e.g., if there are personal health and safety issues such as those related to family violence.

Although there is one program following one set of standards across the province, there may be some local variance in the way the program is delivered. The degree of variance is under review. The program is designed to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy. Program flexibility is under review, as one of the aims of the program is to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds, including women, single parents, people with differing ethnocultural backgrounds, people with disabilities and youth.

The gross provincial budget for ESS for 1997–98 was $390 million. The province recovered $42.8 million from the municipalities. The costs to the municipalities and regions will be capped based on 1997–98. The province will pay for overages if costs exceed the 1995–96 figures. If costs are less, the savings will be split between the two levels of government. A two-year agreement is being signed to this effect. About 13,000 participants are involved in ESS programming.

Group orientation sessions are held for all employable recipients and may take up to three days. The sessions usually are held on-site in the provincial delivery office. If further orientation is required, it is one-on-one. Case managers are expected to continuously monitor the services provided to recipients. This role requires ongoing contact with recipients and service providers to ensure that appointments are kept and that appropriate and effective services are provided with minimum delay.

In addition to existing formal and informal program evaluations, the department plans to continue to refine current evaluation policies and practices and to work with both in-house and outside resources to accomplish this goal. Program audits occur regularly. Results are used to help decide whether to expand or modify the program or initiate new programs. They will also be used to ensure that program objectives are met and to improve overall service to the recipient.

April 1, 1998, represented the conclusion of the first phase of social assistance restructuring in Nova Scotia. As of that date, the province assumed responsibility for delivering all social assistance programs in Nova Scotia. This date also represented the start of the second phase, which includes an in-depth examination of social assistance policies and programs. The eventual goal is to create a modern, single assistance program that meets the needs of citizens.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Program

Employment Support Services (ESS)

Description

ESS is part of the Income and Employment Support Services Division and is administered by the Department of Community Services.

ESS is responsible for the development of employment-related initiatives for individuals in receipt of municipal and provincial social assistance throughout the province. The objective of ESS programming is to support social assistance recipients in moving from welfare to work by promoting self-sufficiency and enabling access to upgrading, training programs and job opportunities. Sub-programs include Career Planning for Single Parents, Employment Resource Centres, Work Activity Projects, Compass and Bridging to Success.

Because the Department of Community Services believes that individuals are responsible for ensuring their own well-being, it encourages and helps people to become independent and to achieve their full potential. Partnerships with people and communities are vital to addressing social needs and preventing social problems.

Goals

ESS has the following goals:

- help social assistance recipients find employment
- develop the short-term work skills of program participants
- make employment more attractive financially than social assistance
- promote lasting connections to the labour market
- reduce the rate at which people leave employment and return to social assistance
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance. To identify barriers to employment, recipients are reassessed from time to time to determine why they are remaining on assistance.
- reduce poverty. One of the strategic goals of the department is to provide an equitable and fair income assistance system for Nova Scotians in need.
- contribute to job creation
- help recipients market themselves in the competitive labour market
- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance

Program Rationale

There are three tiers of social assistance service delivery in Nova Scotia:

- The Income Assistance Program was first delivered as a pilot beginning in August 1995 as part of social assistance restructuring. At that time, nine municipalities were amalgamated into the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM). The program, delivered by the province, now operates in three regional government sites: CBRM, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and Queens Regional Municipality (QRM).
- Municipal social assistance operates outside amalgamated sites, i.e., outside CBRM, HRM and QRM. Most social assistance applicants enter or apply through this system. The focus is on short-term assistance and moving the recipient to self-sufficiency, preferably through employment
- The Family Benefits Program, delivered by the province, targets people who require longer-term support (e.g., people with disabilities, sole-support parents). Consideration is being given to how to transfer these recipients into employment streams.

Social assistance restructuring is part of the general reform agenda of government in Nova Scotia. There has been a lack of harmonization among the tiers of social assistance service delivery; for example, a recipient in one tier might be eligible for a skill development course while that same person would be ineligible if a recipient in another tier.

In concert with the reform of municipal governance, the delivery of Municipal Social Assistance and Family Benefits is being integrated. By April 1, 1998, all social assistance in Nova Scotia will be delivered by the provincial government. By that time, ESS will be province-wide.

The introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer meant that although there were fewer dollars for social assistance, there was more flexibility was in terms of design and implementation. In addition, there was a need to ensure that Nova Scotia had its own standards, as national standards disappeared with the demise of the Canada Assistance Plan.

Additionally, changes to the Employment Insurance program were anticipated to have an overall negative impact on the program.

Program Activities

Main Activity

The primary purpose of ESS is to support individual self-sufficiency. To help social assistance recipients in moving from welfare to work, ESS provides services to the extent necessary to enable recipients to gain entry-level employment in the shortest possible time through the least expensive means.

Specific Activities

The following activities are covered by the program:

- adult basic education/literacy training
- high school completion
- life skills training. This type of training is often connected with other types of employment-related courses. The employment resource centres can offer these courses directly or take advantage of courses available in the community.
- parenting classes. Case managers are expected to link recipients to the services and entitlements that are available to meet their needs. This includes referring or transferring recipients to required services or support networks.
- counselling (referral to community agencies)
- post-secondary education
  - apprenticeship/trades
  - postgraduate training. This is limited to persons with disabilities. There is a two-year limit on this type of training.
- job-readiness training
  - counselling
  - job search training
  - career planning
  - job referrals
  - assessment. Assessment services within career counselling include self-, medical and psychiatric, psychological, vocational and social or life skills assessment.
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience
- self-employment
- volunteer activities

The service delivery model relies on a coordinated continuum of support services. The model focuses on early intervention, with emphasis on the determination of employability at the time of application, a recipient-driven action plan, enhanced incentives and the provision of comprehensive employment services to address identified recipient needs.

When a person applies to ESS, an income assistance worker completes a financial and employability assessment. Based on the results, applicants are directed to the appropriate stream of services.

- Stream I services are for individuals who are job ready or close to job ready.
- Stream II services are for individuals requiring career counselling and training before seeking entry-level employment.

- Stream III recipients have the potential to be employable, but currently have major barriers to training and labour force participation. If the barriers are removable by short-term interventions (one year or less), the recipient would be suitable for referral to Stream I or II services.
- Stream IV recipients are indefinitely unemployable or require long-term treatment interventions to reach a stage where they can participate in Stream I or II activities. People in Stream IV are likely to be severely disabled or aged or have life circumstances that impede their participation in employment services.

Once a service stream is identified the case manager responsible for the provision of the identified service is assigned.

Stream I recipients who are assessed as job ready are referred to the job developer. The job developer is responsible for direct employment placement, the identification of job vacancies, marketing the skills of job-ready recipients to the employer community, matching individuals with job vacancies and contracting with employers to provide work experience and transitional placements.

Stream I recipients who have job skills but who require assistance preparing and organizing a comprehensive job search are referred to the career service navigator. The career service navigator is responsible for information and referral services, brokerage of required service needs, job search clubs and job search support services. The navigator may help recipients with résumés, interview preparation, networking skills and job maintenance skills.

Stream II recipients are referred to the career counsellor, who is responsible for assessment, career counselling, brokerage services to appropriate training programs, financial support to assist with training, follow-up support services and information and referral services.

For Stream III and some Stream IV recipients, the income assistance worker assigns a "bring-forward date", i.e., a date by which, after short-term or long-term interventions, the recipient may be suitable for referral to Stream I or II. The income assistance worker remains responsible for all matters related to income assistance eligibility even though the recipient may be under the direction of a case manager from another service stream. The income assistance worker has case management responsibilities for all recipients not involved in training and employment services.

Five subprograms of ESS – Career Planning for Single Parents, Employment Resource Centres, Work Activity Projects, Compass and Bridging to Success – are available on a voluntary basis. Currently, participant demand for these programs exceeds capacity; there are waiting lists for all programs. With the exception of Compass, which ended in March 1997, all subprograms were integrated into the main ESS program on April 1, 1998.

- *Career Planning for Single Parents* Since 1983, this program has assisted single parents receiving family benefits to secure part-time or full-time employment. Activities include assessment services, career counselling, financial assistance for child care and transportation during training and job search assistance. Counsellors meet with recipients on an individual or group basis to design an individual career plan. Located throughout the province in regional and district offices, counsellors are supervised locally while program policy, standards and audits are centrally maintained. This approach ensures province-wide uniformity and regional flexibility.

- *Employment Resource Centres (ERCs)* The first ERC opened in 1988, and 14 are now located throughout the province. ERCs work with municipalities to direct social assistance recipients to community-specific employment. Staff work closely with individual employees, boards of trade and economic development agencies to ensure that local needs – of both recipients and communities – are considered. Activities include work-readiness assessments, job-finding clubs, job placement (some subsidized), job creation initiatives, referral to training and referral to community resources to address long-term barriers. Participants may either self-refer or be referred by the income assistance worker. They may be required to complete a group intake workshop (1 to 2 days) or may be assessed individually.

- *Work Activity Projects* Since 1966, work activity projects have provided reduced barriers to employment through assessment, skills development and work experience. Emphasis has been placed on literacy programming and strengthening relationships with other community agencies. Participants have a variety of backgrounds and various disadvantages, disabilities and skill levels. Currently, there are five work activity projects, each with a manager responsible for project delivery. Not all participants are social assistance recipients. Criteria for selection include identified need for the program's services, participant's willingness to attend and no other service more appropriate. Participants are expected to participate on a full-time basis.

- *Compass* A strategic initiative funded by the federal and provincial governments, Compass began in 1994 as a response to rising caseloads at both the provincial and municipal level and to growing dependency on social assistance, especially among youth and single parents. Compass had four components:
  - The work experience option provided unemployed youth (18 to 30 years of age) with an opportunity to gain paid work experience. Youth were matched with host employers who had demonstrated the ability to provide training. On completion of the work experience, recipients received job-search counselling.
  - The transitional training option targeted people who were likely to have long-term dependence on social assistance, such as single parents and people with a disability, but who were job ready and would benefit more from skills

  development than from formal skills training. A wage subsidy of $5.62 per hour was available to private-sector employers who offered up to six months of full-time work to social assistance recipients. Employers were required to contribute a minimum of 25% of the hourly wage.
  - The enterprise development option assisted recipients who wanted to establish a small business. Stream I recipients acquired core training in entrepreneurial skills and business development over 20 weeks. Stream II recipients could receive loan assistance of up to $2000 for their business and, in exceptional cases, up to $5000 through the Business Service Centres of the Nova Scotia Economic Renewal Agency.
  - The opportunity fund enabled the purchase of specialty items or services such as text books, manuals, course fees, workboots and safety equipment to enhance the employability of a recipient. The fund was used by recipients who were involved in provincial vocational training and employment programs.

- ***Bridging to Success*** When Compass ended, Bridging to Success began. This program seeks to reduce dependency on income assistance through the provision of a range of employment focused programs, enhance the employability of recipients, encourage employment opportunities, reduce case costs through recipient involvement in employment placements and provide meaningful partnership opportunities for government and the private sector. Targeted recipients include educated, highly motivated single parents and employable single recipients, mostly male, for whom the state has a high contingent liability into the future if they do not secure labour market attachment. There are five components:
  - The subsidized employment placement strategy (target: 1,500 recipients) strives to place recipients with private-sector employers using wage subsidies where there is a strong labour market. Employers receive a bonus if the recipient is retained for an extended period of time.
  - The non-subsidized employment placement strategy (target: 100 recipients) uses job developers to place recipients with private-sector employers who are interested in this service without a wage subsidy. Recipients are marketed and supported in employment through minimal job developer intervention. Although wages are not subsidized, employers do receive a small bonus for participation.
  - In work experience programs through community partnerships (target: 500 recipients, mostly under the age of 30), recipients are placed for 20 weeks at a minimum wage. Where private-sector infrastructure is weak, strategies include volunteer internships, partnering with community-based job creation initiatives and partnering with the Environmental Youth Corps program and Human Resources Development Canada.

- Infrastructure projects (target: 250 recipients) create employment opportunities for groups of skilled recipients under an infrastructure project for 24 weeks or initiatives developed under the immigrant investment fund.
- The entrepreneurship component (target: 100 recipients) encourages suitable recipients to develop their own small business. In partnership with the Economic Renewal Agency, Human Resources Development Canada, the Cal Meadow Foundation and credit unions, the plan is to develop a small loans program to assist recipients in establishing micro enterprises.

Training and Educational Activities

Although training or education programs have not been developed specifically for ESS, incentives are provided to encourage participation in upgrading or skill training as needed to bring the recipient to job readiness for an entry-level position in their chosen occupation:

- During upgrading or short-term vocational training (six months or less), employable adults may be granted basic assistance and supplementary benefits.
- Recipients with a disability may be granted basic assistance and supplementary benefits during participation in occupationally specific post-secondary training when it is demonstrated that without such intervention the recipient is likely to have long-term dependency on full or supplementary benefits. The training must build on any previous skills and knowledge. Single employable persons are not eligible to receive income assistance while attending post-secondary training.

The career counsellor provides information on the inventory of upgrading and vocational training programs available through the Department of Education and Culture and supports the recipient in applying for a chosen program.

Employment-Based Activities

ESS includes measures to build strong links with local employers to help participants gain employment experience and find jobs. Part of the role of the job developer is to identify employer vacancies and to work with the employer community to obtain employer placements. The job developer also markets participants to employers and arranges interviews.

Program Design And Implementation

Responsibility for Design

The Department of Community Services was the primary department responsible for the design of the program. Other departments included Health, Education and Culture, Housing and Municipal Affairs and Economic Development and Tourism.

Before designing the program, the province consulted all stakeholders, including municipalities, non-profit community organizations, social assistance recipients, academics and private-sector employers.

Responsibility for Implementation
The Department of Community Services is responsible for the implementation and ongoing administration of the program.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation
There is one policy and one program in the province as of April 1, 1998. Although there will be one set of standards, there may be some variance in procedures across the province in the way the program is delivered. The degree of variance is under review.

Duration of the Program
In concert with the reform of municipal governance, the delivery of municipal social assistance and family benefits began to be integrated in August 1995. As of April 1, 1998, the province delivers all assistance and programming.

No policy defines how long recipients can remain in particular streams. The streams are fluid, as the province is attempting to get away from a categorical base.

There are policies in Cape Breton about the maximum length of time recipients can pursue education and training courses; however, these policies have changed (i.e., the maximum length of time is less) as ESS became province-wide.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants
Financial assistance is provided to program participants on the basis of their eligibility for general social assistance. The following are provided under ESS:

- wage supplements (Compass and Bridging to Success)
- training allowances. Eligibility for assistance for training programs such as evening and day academic upgrading, community college academic upgrading, continuing education courses, books and related transportation are contingent upon the completion of an employability assessment and recommendation of an employment counsellor. Bridging to Success is the funding of last resort. All individuals attending post-secondary training must seek and apply for all other available funding to assist with educational expenses.
- compensation for job-related expenses
- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction
- compensation for child-care expenses

- transportation subsidies. Bridging assistance may be provided to cover transportation costs associated with an approved employment plan, training plan or job search.
- moving expenses. Relocation expenses may be approved if employment has been secured in another region and other avenues of relocation are unavailable.
- assistance for persons with disabilities. Disability-related special education costs are to be given consideration under the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Program. Where career counselling services are provided, an assessment of the recipient's specific occupational requirements is made and the career action plan identifies the technical and mobility aids needed to assist the recipient to enter the chosen occupation. The job developer and career counsellor work together with employers in making a specific workplace accessible.
- supplemental health care. Medical supplies and services and prescription drugs are provided only when need has been documented by a medical practitioner. All recipients and dependents are required to co-pay a flat fee of $3 per prescription.
- dental care. Dental coverage may be approved for relief of pain, control of prolonged bleeding, treatment of swollen tissue or provision or repair of broken dentures. When dental problems are identified as a barrier to employment, approval may be given by the casework supervisor for assistance with dental services.
- special clothing allotment. An allotment may be issued, if no other resources are available, for apparel incidental to obtaining or carrying on a trade or other employment or training, or for special clothing necessary because of a disability.
- tuition and books
- tools and equipment
- limited volunteer work
- job-search efforts (e.g., résumé preparation and distribution)
- eyeglasses and eye examinations. The cost of prescribed eyeglasses when required by a recipient or dependent may be included as an item of special need.

The aggregate of expenses for transportation, tuition and books, clothing, tools and equipment, and time-limited volunteer work associated with a career goal cannot exceed $100 per month.

Deadlines and Subsidies

Social assistance is not granted or continued to people who refuse to accept employment that is within their capability. Social assistance is also not granted to people who refuse to participate in an approved upgrading or training program to which they have been accepted and that is part of an agreed career plan.

A program participant can have additional sources of income and remain in the program. Employment incentives are designed to assist and encourage recipients to enter the workforce full-time.

The first $50 of net monthly earned income for recipients with no dependents and the first $100 of net monthly earned income for recipients with dependents is exempt. In the case of self-employment, the income of a recipient includes 100% of the net profit from a business or self-employment. In the case of a new business, if net profit can be shown to be negated by initial operating expenses, a monthly wage is not assumed and social assistance is provided. This policy does not exceed three months except with an approved ESS plan, wherein it may be extended to a maximum of six months. Also, where a business has incurred a net loss during a 12-month period, the loss is not considered in the calculation of benefits.

Child support payments received by program participants affect the amount of financial assistance provided. The lack of predictability of child support payments is taken into account. If a non-custodial parent defaults on a maintenance payment and, therefore, a recipient does not receive maintenance income (and the maintenance income has been charged against the budget), the recipient may be provided emergency assistance.

Financial Incentives for Employers

Financial incentives are offered to employers through special programs. In particular, the targeted wage subsidy component formerly under the Compass program has continued through the Bridging to Success program.

Program Funding

The gross provincial budget for ESS for 1997–98 was $390 million. The province recovered $42.8 million from the municipalities. The net cost to municipalities and regional governments was based on 1995–96 expenditures. The costs to the municipalities and regions will be capped based on 1997–98. The province will pay for overages if costs exceed the 1995–96 figures. If costs are less, the savings will be split between the two levels of government. A two-year agreement is being signed to this effect.

Program funding increased during the last three years. Cutbacks have not had an impact on program staffing. When the Cape Breton pilot began in 1995, additional staff were hired. There has been no other incremental staffing since then.

There are no plans to decrease social assistance rates. A principle driving social assistance reform is cost neutrality.

Subsidized Child Care

Child-care expenses may be provided to cover actual costs associated with a recipient's attendance in an approved training plan. Costs may be covered on behalf of children up to 13 years of age and children with disabilities over 13 years. In extenuating circumstances, consideration may be given to cover the cost of child-care for children over the age of 13.

Monthly allowable expenses are $200 for one child or $300 for two or more children in full-time care (> 5 hours daily).

The supply of child-care spaces is not sufficient to meet the needs of program participants. Waiting lists for subsidized child care range from six months to two years. A Department of Community Services committee has been struck to study this problem and make recommendations.

Assistance for child care is not normally covered if the care is provided by family members; however, if a family member other than the child's parent has foregone an income source or removed herself or himself from the labour market to provide the service, assistance for child care may be provided.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

ESS is provided to income assistance recipients who have an identified need based on a comprehensive assessment by an income assistance worker. The required services are identified as Stream I to Stream IV.

Applicants aged 16 to 19 are not eligible except in exceptional circumstances:

- They are exposed to an alleged unsafe home environment or an unresolvable adolescent–parent conflict.
- They are unable, because of a parental decision, to remain or return home and they
  - have limited or no financial means of support
  - may be single, or pregnant, or a single parent
  - may have limited or no demonstrated experience living independently
  - may be assessed as marginally employable due to limited education and work experience

Employable applicants, where appropriate, must conduct up to a three-day job search pending assignment to a worker.

Caseloads

The number of participants involved in each of the programs annually is as follows:

- Career Planning for Single Parents, 3,200
- Employment Resource Centres, 6000
- Work Activity Projects, 600

- Compass, 3000
- Bridging to Success, just beginning

ESS is able to serve more people than in the past as there has been a relative increase in the number of recipients requiring self-directed services, i.e., services that are less labour intensive.

The following types of information are gathered about participants:
demographics

- education and training history
- employment history
- medical–social history, as required
- child-care needs and use
- participation in special programs

Statistics are not kept in a standardized manner. The collection of standardized data is a goal of the program and is under review.

The recipient's entry to the service stream is at the discretion of the case manager. Where staff in the designated service stream are at their maximum caseload, intake is controlled by the use of waiting lists. These lists are chronological in nature and vary by program – e.g., the wait for Employment Resource Centres is one to three weeks.

Nature of Participation

Participation in ESS is mandatory for social assistance recipients. Social assistance may not be granted or continued to people who refuse to accept employment that is within their capability, an approved upgrading or training program or a job readiness process.

Social assistance is not granted for a period of six weeks from the date of the last paycheque

- to a person who is unemployed by reason of an act of his or her own volition
- to a person who leaves employment without just cause
- to a person dismissed from her or his job for non-compliance with the employer's reasonable requests, terms and conditions

Notwithstanding, minimal assistance may be issued if there is undue hardship during the six-week period.

Non-participation in ESS may be accepted in exceptional cases – e.g., if there are personal health and safety issues such as those related to family violence. Family violence includes woman abuse, child abuse and adults in need of protection. The term *family* refers to two or more people related by kinship, affection, dependency or trust. Family violence can take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, intimidation, neglect, deprivation, financial exploitation or ritual abuse.

If certain services stipulated by the program cannot be provided, a participant can postpone participation in that element of the program until those services become available.

Orientation and Follow-up

Group orientation sessions are held for all employable recipients and may take up to three days. A staff facilitator explains responsibilities and obligations, resources, program objectives and program processes. The sessions usually are held on-site in the provincial delivery office. If applicants do not participate in these sessions, the case is reviewed and benefits may cease or not begin. If further orientation is required, it is one-on-one.

The intake worker explains initial and ongoing eligibility requirements and the applicant's responsibilities, including job-search efforts and pursing other potential sources of income.

The income assistance worker conducts a home visit within three working days of assignment to the case to establish a good working relationship with the recipient. This staff worker explains the application and all other relevant declarations and forms that the applicant must complete and sign.

In terms of follow-up, the income assistance worker manages the ongoing case, authorizes each issuance of assistance and requests monthly income statements from all recipients and job-search statements from employable recipients. Case management is a set of logical steps and a process of interaction within a service network that assures that a recipient receives needed services in a supportive, effective, efficient and cost-effective manner. The major roles assumed by the case manager are those of case coordinator, counsellor and recipient advocate.

Other ESS staff (job developer, career service navigator and career counsellor, depending on the stream) work with the recipient throughout the delivery of services. The case management function may be transferred from worker to worker as the recipient progresses through the various service streams.

Case managers are expected to continuously monitor the services provided to recipients. This role requires ongoing contact with recipients and service providers to ensure that appointments are kept and that appropriate and effective services are provided with minimum delay. Case managers are expected to remain aware of their recipients' comprehensive needs, their current and potential strengths and weaknesses and any changes in their capabilities or needs.

Appeals Process

Applicants and recipients have the right to appeal decisions on any matter relating to their entitlement to benefits. Recipients also have the right to appeal decisions relating to the provision of training and employment financial benefits. It is the responsibility of ESS staff to advise all recipients and applicants of their right to appeal upon denial of or adjustment to benefits.

The first step for recipients is to attempt a satisfactory resolution with the ESS staff. The ESS staff notify the income assistance worker of the recipient's desire to appeal.

Two levels of review are available. Recipients have the right to request a formal appeal, but they can also make a first appeal to a worker's immediate supervisor. If the supervisor does not change a decision, then the formal appeal process can be followed.

After administrative review, the casework supervisor informs the applicant or recipient of the results of the review within three working days. If the request has been denied, the result is provided in writing, if requested, and includes the following:

- the reason for the decision
- information on the right to appeal for an external review (formal appeal)
- the process and address for initiating a formal appeal

An applicant or recipient may initiate an appeal by a written request to the Appeal Board within 30 days of the original decision, or within 30 days of the original decision by the caseworker, or within 30 days of the administrative review decision.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

The following provincial and regional economic conditions were taken into account in designing the program:

- predominant economic activities. The program is designed to ensure that the local job openings and skills requirements match the skills the program participants have or could develop during the program, and assessments are done to ensure that local future employment requirements are part of the program design.
- current shifts in economic activities. Economic restructuring was taken into account.

- employment trends. Layoffs and closures were taken into account.
- unemployment rates. The unemployment rate of the geographic areas was taken into account.

Reviews of other jurisdictions were conducted during program design for best practices. Programs of all Canadian provinces were examined, with a special emphasis on New Brunswick Works and British Columbia Works. Programs of some of the United States were also examined, as were U.S. federal government initiatives.

Employment Equity and Displacement

The program design does not take into account the fact that women and men tend to predominate in different jobs. The department uses an individual approach, not a gender-based approach, in responding to needs and allocating resources.

The program is designed to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy. ESS participants cannot displace other workers. If displacement does occur, the department will not place with that employer again. As a general rule, the department tries not to use multiple placements with the same employer.

Community Services

Integration of Community Services

The income assistance worker refers the recipient to the appropriate service, which may include ESS, Family and Children Services, Health Care Services or community-based service agencies. Caseworkers make other referrals to other community resources when deemed necessary for the well-being of the recipient, spouse or dependents. These referrals may include health, social or employability services as appropriate. Caseworkers document reasons for making a referral.

Single-Window Access

As of April 1, 1998, a one-tier system was in place, integrating the training, employment programs and income support services provided by various levels of government and departments.

Community Diversity

Program flexibility in meeting the needs of people from different backgrounds is under review, as one of the aims of the program is to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds, including women, single parents, people with differing ethnocultural backgrounds, people with disabilities and youth.

The program attempts to meet this objective in a number of ways:

- Some of the special interventions target groups – e.g., single parents are targeted through Career Planning for Single Parents; one component of Bridging to Success targets youth.
- Sensitivity training is delivered to all staff of the Department of Community Services.
- Regional liaison committees reflect the diversity of the community.
- Wherever possible, employers are urged to cover the cost of making their workplace accessible to workers with disabilities. Where this is not feasible, requests are made to Human Resources Development Canada and the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities program.

Although the department is looking at the suitability of programs for specific groups of recipients, services have been and continue to be geared to recipients based on their employability and not to membership in a group.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

In addition to existing formal and informal program evaluations, the department plans to continue to refine current evaluation policies and practices and to work with both in-house and outside resources to accomplish this goal. Program audits continue to occur regularly.

As part of the provincial government's ongoing commitment to accountability, outcome measures in the department business plan have been developed. The goals of the department and the reporting of these goals have been incorporated into a larger, government-wide document, *Government by Design*.

Compass has been fully evaluated, both during and after the program. Other programs have not been extensively evaluated; any evaluating has been done to contribute to redefining program direction. There is little information available on the types of jobs recipients get after involvement in these programs.

Cost–Benefit Research

Cost–benefit research will continue to be part of the program evaluation. Some of the outcome measures as detailed in the department's 1997–98 business plan speak to cost–benefit evaluation; examples of these measures include the number and value of overpayments detected and recovered and the percentage of income assistance recipients who go off assistance as a result of obtaining employment.

Both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits will be measured. The department is examining issues such as quality of service: What are recipients' basic needs and how should they be measured?

Outcome Data
Data will be collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance
- the number of participants who get jobs. Program officials are not aware of the reasons why many people leave social assistance. It is difficult to track people who receive self-directed services, as there is no need for these recipients to report.
- the extent to which program participants retain the jobs they get
- the time required to find a job
- the nature of the jobs obtained by program participants (full-time or part-time, short-term or long-term, seasonal, contract, temporary)

The department would also like to track recidivism – i.e., the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare – but does not have the mechanism to do so; the matter is under review.

Participant Evaluation
Participants may be asked to participate in evaluations voluntarily.

The department is considering collecting data on such aspects of family well-being as children's health and development, parent's well-being and housing conditions.

There are no plans to collect data that track changes in job readiness.

Use of Findings
The evaluation results will be used to help decide whether to expand or modify the program or initiate new programs. They will also be used to ensure that program objectives are met and to improve overall service to the recipient.

Evaluation results may also be used to eliminate the program or redirect resources.

To date, evaluations have identified the need for a standardized system of communication throughout the province. Additionally, the province is developing a strategy for co-location, as currently it occurs on an ad hoc basis. Co-location now exists in North Sydney and Antigonish; discussions are under way about a co-location in Digby.

Evaluations of partnerships with non-government and non-profit groups have indicated the need for a clear vision of the role of each partner. There needs to be a mechanism to deal with political issues among the groups; an operational framework would be helpful for this and other collaborative issues. As a principle, communication between the province and other partners must be transparent. Partners must be treated as peers and allowed to make their own decisions.

Evaluations of partnerships with the private sector have indicated that face-to-face contact is preferable to other forms of contact. Also, it is useful if the social services worker has a business background, as the private sector recipient should be approached from a business perspective and not a social services one.

Other Issues

The assessment is evaluating delayed welfare exits – i.e., later-than-expected exits from the social assistance system that result from individuals extending their period of welfare receipt in order to qualify for the program. This has been identified as a potential issue and is being looked at to ensure that it does not occur.

Entry effects – i.e., whether the program influences people not on welfare to apply for assistance in order to qualify for the program – is another issue that has been identified. This, too, will be examined.

A third issue is how to measure the non-monetary costs and social benefits of the program.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

April 1, 1998, represented the conclusion of the first phase of social assistance restructuring in Nova Scotia. As of that date, the province assumed responsibility for delivering all social assistance programs in Nova Scotia. This date also represented the start of the second phase, which includes an in-depth examination of social assistance policies and programs. The eventual goal is to create a modern, single assistance program that meets the needs of citizens.

On April 1, 52 municipal units joined the Cape Breton, Halifax and Queens regional municipalities in having their social assistance programs delivered by the province. Permanent municipal social services staff started working for the province. These changes only affected the short-term program, social assistance. The long-term program, family benefits, remains unchanged. About 5,100 cases – about 10% of the total provincial caseload – was affected.

The new provincial program creates equity in short-term assistance across the province. The rates of assistance consist of the following components:

- basic personal allowances (food, clothing and miscellaneous essentials). Social assistance rates specifically target the needs of families with children from infancy to age 18. Compared to municipal rates, the average recipient in that category has seen an increase of 20% in basic personal allowances.
- basic shelter allowances (based on actual cost up to a maximum amount). The maximum shelter allowances for families have increased substantially, on average, over previous municipal levels.

Additionally, the new program has benefits and features not previously available to many municipal recipients, such as Pharmacare and standardized special needs coverage:

- Pharmacare. Under Pharmacare, recipients are required to co-pay a flat fee of $3 per prescription. This system uses the health card number (HCN) supplied by the Department of Health. All recipients and their dependents requiring Pharmacare coverage must be able to provide their HCN.
- Standardized special needs. A special needs policy was implemented April 1 as part of the new provincial short-term program. Eligibility is determined by the caseworker. Included in this program is provision for the Healthy Baby Program/Maternal Nutritional Allowance, which provides $29 per month to single pregnant women and new mothers up to the time the baby reaches four months old. Participants have access to nutritional counselling and instruction from a public health nurse.

Contact

NAME: Tracey Williams
TITLE: Director, Employment Support Services
ADDRESS: Department of Community Services
Income and Employment Support Division
2nd Floor, Johnson Building
5182 Prince Street, PO Box 696
Halifax, NS
B3J 2T7
E-MAIL: HLFXJOHN.COMS.WILLIATL@GOV.NS.CA
TELEPHONE: (902) 424-8275
FAX: (902) 424-0721

Primary Information Sources

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- 1995 annual report, Department of Community Services
- Training and Employment Policy, Cape Breton
- *Social Assistance Policy Manual,* Halifax
- *Family Benefits Program Manual*
- *Work Activity Policy and Program Manual*
- *The Compass Program: Charting Your Career Direction*
- Strategic Initiatives evaluation brief, Nova Scotia Compass Program
- Strategic Initiatives evaluation, Nova Scotia Compass Program
- *Employer's Guide,* Compass Program
- Bridging to Success project proposal
- Fax dated January 16, 1997, describing Nova Scotia's welfare-to-work programs
- Fax dated December 3, 1997, describing Nova Scotia's welfare-to-work programs
- Internal document of the Department of Community Services briefly describing past and current employment initiatives, provided during meetings with Nova Scotia officials on April 15 and 16, 1997
- Department of Community Services business plan for 1997/98
- *Monitoring the Impacts on Social Assistance Recipients of Welfare Cuts and Changes: An Overview,* report from the National Anti-poverty Organization, October 1996

Index of Acronyms

CBRM - Cape Breton Regional Municipality
ESS - Employment Support Services
ERCs - Employment Resource Centres
HCN - health card number
HRM - Halifax Regional Municipality
QRM - Queens Regional Municipality

NEW BRUNSWICK

Summary

New Brunswick Works (NB Works) was a longitudinal demonstration project of Human Resources Development New Brunswick (HRDNB). It was directed toward enhancing welfare recipients' employability and self-sufficiency through a three-year program commitment to the participant and continuous case management. Given its demonstration project status, it was also a learning tool for future programs. NB Works began in 1992 and ended in 1998.

The Department of Advanced Education and Labour (DAEL) was responsible for employment placements and training, including upgrading, in the community colleges. HRDNB was responsible for case management, career planning, career consulting and topping up benefits if required. Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) provided financial income support in the form of a training allowance and some special benefits, such as child care and transportation. The HRDNB case manager was the point of contact throughout a participant's involvement in the project, from the recruitment phase, through the initial job placement, academic upgrading and skills training, to the transition to employment.

Training and education was provided by community colleges, a trade school (Memramcook Institute), employers (internships) and private training centres (purchased training). NB Works used some existing programs, purchased some programs from private institutions and had some specifically designed. Employment activities occured for 20 weeks at the beginning of the project so that the participant qualified for unemployment insurance and the training allowance. Employment activities also occurred during the upgrading or training phase (as an internship) and during the Partners (subsidized employment) program that followed NB Works.

Participation in the program was voluntary. NB Works targeted recipients with dependent children, limited education and few work skills and very little previous labour force attachment. Potential participants had to have Grade 7 to 12 education but not a high school diploma and had to have been receiving social assistance in New Brunswick for at least six consecutive months during the two previous years. Eighty per cent of participants were women, many of whom had preschool or elementary school aged children. Visible minority groups accounted for three per cent and aboriginal people two per cent of program participants. Seven per cent of participants had a self-proclaimed disability that had affected their past school performance, 11% had a disability that had affected their past workplace performance, and 8% to 11% had a disability that had affected their work in the home.

Participants were expected to complete the program in three years, but there was some flexibility.

In designing the program, consideration was given to promoting well-paid jobs for women, primarily low-income female lone parents. Also considered was the match between the career goals of NB Works participants and the projected growth for selected occupations in New Brunswick. Participating employers could not displace existing employees or volunteers.

Program funders included Human Resources Development Canada, HRDNB and DAEL, with a 50-50 cost sharing agreement between the federal and provincial levels of government. The initial budget included $28.5 million for the employment phase (DAEL), $52.2 million for the training development fund (50-50 federal-provincial split) and $68.4 million for employment insurance (HRDC). Program funding over six years was $177 million. Over the six years of the project, 2,800 participants entered NB Works.

The program selection and orientation was extensive. Potential participants were identified and invited to information sessions about the different program phases and expectations of NB Works. Orientation was usually provided through group sessions over two weeks and was available in all areas of the province. Interested people were given an academic achievement test to ensure that they were eligible to enter the intermediate or senior level of academic upgrading. The next step was attendance at a pre-employment session given by a private firm under contract to the project. During this session, the potential participants were prepared for employment, and their attitudes. Participants were then chosen for the project. Case managers, career consultants and DAEL staff provided program participants with ongoing assistance and follow-up. Periodic monitoring of a participant's involvement and performance was maintained. There was no formal appeal process. Individuals could bring a complaint through normal organizational channels.

An evaluation was conducted midway through the project and further evaluation is currently under way to examine the process, impact, cost-effectiveness and long-term policy implications of the project and the level of participant satisfaction. Evaluation results will be used to assist in the design of new programs.

HRDNB has recently been restructured, including the development of a new management information system, NB Case. At the same time, the province has significantly increased the number of case management staff. HRDNB is also developing an Education and Training Strategy that will guide the department in meeting its mandate of assisting recipients in their move to self-sufficiency.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Program

New Brunswick Works (NB Works)

Description

NB Works is a longitudinal demonstration project of Human Resources Development New Brunswick (HRDNB). It is based on the concept of continuous case management over three years for each participant. The HRDNB case manager is the point of contact throughout a participant's involvement in the project, from the recruitment phase, through the initial job placement, academic upgrading and skills training, to the transition to employment. NB Works was designed to be flexible to meet the needs of participants.

NB Works built on financial partnerships that had been associated with the Employability Enhancements Program. Given its demonstration project status, changes in policies and operations are expected as project operators become more aware of the needs, expectations and abilities of participant groups.

Goals

NB Works has the following goals:

- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment
- develop the long-term work skills of program participants
- promote lasting connections to the labour market
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance
- reduce poverty
- change the attitudes of persons on social assistance

Program Rationale

The development of New Brunswick Works was stimulated by a sharp increase in the number of people receiving social assistance, which placed a heavy financial burden on the federal and provincial governments. Many of the people receiving social assistance were viewed as not having skills or education to exit social assistance and obtain long-term employment. In addition, there was a perception that government training programs were fragmented, with few links between the various programs, and that they were too brief to be effective for many social assistance recipients.

NB Works was designed and implemented before the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). Under the Canada Assistance Plan, funding was more open-ended. If the province decided to direct a specific amount of funding to the welfare program, New Brunswick could expect the federal government to share costs 50-50. With the CHST and block funding, the costs for income support and the purchase of training for groups are not shared. With the changes in Employment Insurance, the 156-week training allowance is gone.

Program Activities

Main Activity

NB Works is directed toward enhancing welfare recipients' employability and self-sufficiency through a three-year program commitment to the participant and continuous case management. Given its demonstration project status, it is also a learning tool for future programs.

Specific Activities

The following types of activities are covered by the program:

- adult basic education literacy training
- second language training
- life skills training. If required, a short-term internship might also be planned to meet specific needs and to teach certain life skills.
- counselling on
  - job stress
  - family stress
  - family violence (by referral)
  - the stress of balancing employment and family conflicts
  - the stress of balancing school and family conflicts
  - substance abuse (by referral)
- high-school completion
- apprenticeship/trades/skills training
- job-readiness training
  - counselling
  - job-search training
  - career planning
  - job referrals
  - sexual harassment information
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience

Self-employment is not promoted; however, NB Works will support an individual's venture if it is deemed feasible. The Department of Advanced Education and Labour (DAEL) has an entrepreneur program that may be available to participants if recommended by the case manager.

Summer school is an option if a person needs extra time to complete upgrading.

Potential participants are interviewed to determine their eligibility. They are invited to information sessions and then an orientation. In the first intake, HRDNB did not offer academic testing before accepting recipients. As a result, a number of participants had great difficulty with academic upgrading. In the second and third intakes, academic testing was included to evaluate whether the person could cope with the academic upgrading, skills training and program time lines.

Before the initial job placement, the case manager interviews the participant and begins the development of a case plan. The case plan consists of an assessment of the participant to identify skills, barriers and occupational goals. The case manager identifies the interventions that may be necessary and, with the participant, develops a plan intended to address the individual's needs and objectives.

During the initial job placement and in all other phases of NB Works, case managers and participants are jointly responsible for reviewing, refining and adjusting the case plan. The case manager is responsible for monitoring the participant's involvement and progress and maintaining contact with the participant and employer.

During academic upgrading, case managers continue to be responsible for the ongoing development of case plans. During this phase, DAEL staff may be involved in further developing an educational component to the case plan that is consistent with the participant's career goals and objectives.

Training and Educational Activities

Training and education is provided by community colleges, a trade school (Memramcook Institute), employers (internships) and private training centres (purchased training). DAEL provides instructors in community colleges, HRDNB provides case management and career counselling, and Human Resources Development Canada provides financial income support in the form of a training allowance and some special benefits, such as child care and transportation.

NB Works uses some existing programs, purchases some programs from private institutions and had some specifically designed. For participants with low academic potential, special programs – e.g., Academic Development for Employment – were designed to help them find jobs they could handle.

To take advantage of certain work opportunities, "just-in-time" training is provided. For example, the Warehousing course and the Call Centre course were designed because there were opportunities in those areas in New Brunswick and participants interested in taking those opportunities.

At the outset it was hoped that all participants would attain an academic high school diploma. This has not been possible to realize in some situations.

Employment-Based Activities

There are three times during the project when employment activities occur:

- for 20 weeks at the beginning of the project to qualify for unemployment insurance and the training allowance
- during the upgrading or training phase (as an internship; there is no employer–employee relationship during this period)
- during the Partners program that follows NB Works (subsidy employment)

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

Human Resources Development Canada, HRDNB and DAEL were the architects of NB Works.

Responsibility for Implementation

The implementation of the program is assisted by these three departments through the following committees:

- The Management Committee is the major decision-making body receiving financial and communications project information. It monitors project funding and approves the annual intake plan and communications strategy. It recommends the approval of expenditures from the Training Development Fund. It also ensures that input received from the federal and New Brunswick governments is reflected in NB Works policy.
- The Coordinating Committee reports to the Management Committee and ensures that the project is operating efficiently and effectively.
- The Operations Committee is the driving force behind the implementation of activities for NB Works. It is responsible for making operational decisions about the project and resolves day-to-day issues.

HRDNB is responsible for case management, career planning, career consulting and topping up benefits if required.

DAEL is responsible for employment placements and training, including upgrading, in the community colleges.

After a participant completes the initial 20-week work placement, financial responsibility for support (training allowance and supplemental benefits) transfers to Human Resources Development Canada.

Duration of the Program

NB Works is a longitudinal demonstration project that was initiated in 1992 and ends in 1998.

The program is divided into the following components:

- 2-week orientation period. Included in this period is the development of the initial case plan, goal setting and academic testing.
- 20-week initial job placement. The job placement provides the basis for recipient eligibility for income support under the training component of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Initial placements are developed by DAEL, which notifies HRDNB regional directors of the positions available. The case manager then assigns participants to positions and meets participants before the start of their work placement to advise them of the work site, work rules and rationale for the placement.
- 9-month academic upgrading period. Participants are assigned to one of three levels of academic upgrading – basic, intermediate or senior – or they may go directly into a skills training program. About 98% of all participants are enroled in upgrading. A summer work internship provides on-the-job training and is used when a person is unable to enrol in classroom-based training.
- a further 9-month academic upgrading period, if required, and a second summer internship
- 1 to 2 years of skills training. This period follows academic upgrading. Initially, it was anticipated that participants would receive one or two years of skills training and then some further activities to better prepare them to make the transition to employment. Academic training took longer for many participants than anticipated.
- 6-week course on the transition to the work world. If necessary, there can be subsidized job placement under the Partners program. This program provides wage subsidies for private-sector employers to establish permanent or annually recurring seasonal jobs in New Brunswick. Fifty per cent of wages are reimbursed for permanent full-time jobs and 40% for seasonally recurring jobs. In all cases, the maximum departmental contribution is $6 per hour for 40 hours per week for a maximum of 26 weeks.

Although all participants are expected to complete the program in three years, there is some flexibility. For example the first intake started late. If the participants had already started skills training and needed more than the 156 weeks funded by Employment Insurance to complete it, NB Works could arrange for assistance; for example, the Training Development Fund could pay for training from October to December, until student loan assistance became available in January. During that time the participant could be provided with social assistance and a health card, if eligible.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

Under NB Works, financial assistance to participants includes the following:

- wage supplements to employers. In the initial job placement, the participant is paid $6.25 per hour (minimum wage is $5.25) by the employer, who is reimbursed by DAEL. The participant's child care costs, clothing allowance and health card are covered by HRDNB. Those 20 weeks of employment render the participant eligible for 156 weeks of training through Employment Insurance.
- benefits and training allowances. The participant receives a training allowance during academic upgrading, internships and the skills training. During this 156-week period, Employment Insurance also covers child-care costs, transportation and a living-away-from-home allowance, if relevant, and the province provides any necessary top-up and a health card.
- compensation for job-related expenses. During the 20-week employment phase only, boots, safety equipment and work clothing (up to $150 per person) are covered if required by the employer.
- compensation for child-care expenses. Compensation is provided by HRDNB during the initial work placement and by Employment Insurance during upgrading, internships and skills training.
- transportation subsidies. HRDNB pays transportation until the first paycheque in the initial job placement. During the training phases, Employment Insurance covers transportation costs.
- housing subsidies. Although these are not included in the program, if a person has to relocate for employment and is already in subsidized housing, NB Works arranges to have them moved up the waiting list for subsidized housing in that area.
- relocation expenses (covered under Employment Insurance in some circumstances)
- assistance for persons with disabilities
- supplemental health care. Participants are given a health card and receive the same benefits as people on social assistance.

- dental care. (as provided under the health card, emergency dental care is covered)
- top-up allowance. The top-up ensures that the participant does not fall below the basic rate of social assistance and is no worse off than she or he would be on social assistance.

Deadlines and Subsidies

There are subsidies both to participants (the Employment Insurance training allowance for 156 weeks) and to providers of services (DAEL subsidizes the initial work placement).

There is a fairly strict attendance policy, as there is for all participants in funded training.

Generally, participants do not lose access to subsidies, benefits or services already available to them by participating in the program. A participant may have additional sources of income and still remain in the program. For example, when program participants are on the initial work placement, they may be receiving a top-up allowance from NB Works. Child support payments received by program participants may affect the amount of social assistance provided to them.

Financial Incentives for Employers

Financial incentives for employers include the following:

- During the initial work placement, the participant is paid $6.25 per hour by the employer, who is reimbursed by DAEL.
- During an internship, neither the employer nor the trainee is paid.
- During the Partners period, there is a partial reimbursement, including 50% for permanent full-time jobs for a maximum of 26 weeks and 40% for seasonally recurring jobs for 10 to 20 weeks.

Program Funding

Program funders include Human Resources Development Canada, HRDNB and DAEL, with a 50-50 cost sharing agreement between the federal and provincial levels of government.

Initial budget:
Employment phase, $28.5 million (DAEL)
Training Development Fund, $52.2 million (50-50 federal-provincial)
Employment Insurance, $68.4 million (HRDC)
Program funding over six years, $177 million

The overall budget for the program was determined by estimated take-up. Program planners modelled a possible participant going though the program, multiplied by 3,000 projected participants and estimated a drop-out rate of about 33%. The money covering training costs and associated administrative expenses comes from funds diverted from federal and provincial social assistance payments that would have been paid to NB Works participants had they remained on social assistance.

The fixed amount costs for each program participant might be a maximum of $100,000 for the three years, including social assistance costs.

Subsidized Child Care

Child-care subsidies are available to program participants under NB Works. Participants are responsible for making their own child care arrangements. It has been estimated that 66% of New Brunswick children are looked after in their own home and 55% are looked after by relatives; the average cost is $90 per week.

HRDNB pays the actual cost of child care to a maximum of
- for informal child care, $2 per hour
- for formal child care, the prevailing rate as set by the provincial day care program

For the 156-week training period, Employment Insurance gives a set amount per child. That amount is more generous than what is provided by HRDNB.

The supply of child-care spaces in the province appears to be sufficient to meet the needs of program participants. The program has not created new child care spaces.

Child care subsidies are guaranteed and will not be eliminated during the program. NB Works participants who were formerly social assistance recipients do not lose access to subsidized child care by participating in the program; however, the subsidy comes from Employment Insurance rather than social assistance.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

The target group for NB Works are recipients with dependent children, limited education and few work skills and very little previous labour force attachment. Potential participants must have Grade 7 to 12 education but not a high school diploma and must have been receiving social assistance in New Brunswick for at least six consecutive months during the two years previous to the NB Works intake period.

Caseloads

As of June 1995, there were 1,534 participants in NB Works. In February 1997, there were 350 persons in their last year in the program. In total over the six years of the project, 2,800 participants entered NB Works.

The following types of information are gathered about participants:
- demographics
- education and training history
- employment history
- child-care needs and use
- length of time in receipt of social assistance

In the first two intakes, case managers were working exclusively with NB Works recipients; however, the NB Works drop-out population has lightened caseloads. Now, case managers have additional responsibilities.

Nature of Participation

Participation in the program is voluntary for social assistance recipients. To ensure that social assistance recipients realize that their participation is voluntary, they are informed at the information session, at the orientation and during the counselling contract period. The primary targeted age groups were youth under 25 years and people of working age (25 to 54 years).

Eighty per cent of participants are women, many of whom have preschool or elementary school aged children. Visible minority groups accounted for three per cent and aboriginal people two per cent of program participants. Seven per cent of participants joined NB Works with a self-proclaimed disability that had an effect on their past school performance, compared to 21% to 22% of a comparison group. Eleven per cent to 15% of participants joined NB Works with a disability that had an effect on their performance in the workplace, compared to 25% to 29% of the comparison group. Eight per cent to 11% of participants joined NB Works with a disability that had an effect on their work in the home, compared to 21% to 23% of the comparison group.

Program participants may be eligible for social assistance if they decide to leave the program.

Orientation and Follow-up

The program selection process is extensive. Initially, a pool of potential participants is identified through the data management system of social assistance recipients. Information sessions are held in each region of the province tell recipients from this pool about NB Works.

Potential participants are told about the different program phases and expectations of NB Works, and information is also provided about personal budgeting, time management, life skills and goal setting and the value of teamwork. Orientation is usually provided through group sessions over two weeks and is available in all areas of the province.

People who are interested are then given an academic achievement test to determine their level of education. To be considered, they must be eligible to enter the intermediate or senior level of academic upgrading. The next step is attendance at a pre-employment session given by a private firm under contract to the project. During this session, the potential participants are prepared for employment, and their motivation and attitude to a long-term commitment with NB Works are assessed. Participants are then chosen for the project. Thus, NB Works screens out people thought to be difficult or expensive to serve.

Case managers, career consultants and DAEL staff provide program participants with ongoing assistance and follow-up. There is extensive case management training on ethics, abuse and referrals. Theoretically, the case manager handles a participant's file throughout the individual's entire program, although others (career consultant and DAEL staff) are involved.

Periodic monitoring of a participant's involvement is maintained and his or her performance is evaluated. A decision may be made to remove the participant from the program on the basis of this evaluation, but only after discussing the situation with the individual, trying to address the barriers and going through a case conference process in an effort to resolve the problems.

Appeals Process

There is no formal appeal process. Individuals can bring a complaint through normal organizational channels.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

The following provincial economic conditions were taken into account in designing the program:

- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities

- employment trends
- unemployment rates
- social assistance rates

The designers of NB Works took into account labour market information and tried to train people for the existing labour market needs; however, their main focus was preventing second and third generations of welfare dependency. The program was designed to target persons with dependent children who are likely to stay on social assistance for 10 years or more. The designers were particularly concerned about lone parents and their children and wanted to provide them an opportunity to prepare for long-term employment and break the cycle of welfare dependency. Thus, program design indicators such as employment profiles of geographic areas were less a focus than was the employability of lone parents.

NB Works has encountered more barriers than expected; however, program officials believe that they are giving participants opportunities to advance themselves further down the road of employability. Educational advancement is an achievement and will have a positive impact on the family and the children. It is believed that a trained labour force will attract employers.

Although considered during the evaluation phase, no initial assessment was conducted to ensure that the future local employment requirements were part of the program design. The program does not allow for any modifications to design in the case of significant changes to the local economy.

Employment Equity and Displacement

In designing the program, consideration was given to promoting well-paid jobs for women, primarily low-income female lone parents.

Also considered was the match between the career goals of NB Works participants and the projected growth for selected occupations in New Brunswick. The concern remains that men and women tend to choose occupations traditionally occupied by their gender.

The program was also designed to ensure that participants did not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy or volunteers in the unpaid economy. Employers were informed that any job held by an NB Works participant must be in addition to regular employment levels. The job must not displace or replace existing employees, volunteers, employees on lay-off or employees on vacation, and it must comply with collective agreements and provincial and federal acts and regulations. Employer applications were assessed with this in mind, and employers are monitored fairly closely.

Penalties are imposed on employers who use program participants as a source of cheap labour, thereby displacing regular workers. If an employer is found to be displacing regular workers, the placement is terminated and the wage subsidy cancelled. Another placement is found for the participant.

There have been very few complaints about labour displacement.

Community Services

Integration of Community Resources
Resources available in the community to meet the special needs of participants were not taken into account in the design of the program.

Single-Window Access
The intent of NB Works is to provide continuous and long-term case management.

Community Diversity
Although the demographics of social assistance recipients in the community were not specifically considered in program design, the case management approach and program flexibility attempt to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan
A process evaluation was conducted midway through the project (and reported in June 1995) to assess the management and operation of NB Works. In 1998, an impact evaluation will be conducted to examine the process, impact and long-term policy implications as well as cost effectiveness of the demonstration project. This evaluation scheme, at a budget of $800,000, was built into the program design from the outset.

As part of the process evaluation, interviews were conducted with program participants, program administrators, participating employers and program providers, and a tracking survey of 329 participants from the second intake was conducted. Survey information was also collected from 282 participants about the intake and 398 participants about orientation.

Overall data analysis of the process evaluation was done by a specialized firm (Baseline/Norpark Evaluation Consortium).

As a result of the evaluation, refinements were made to committee structures, admission criteria and orientation. For example, NB Works responded to participants' financial problems by the introduction of a top-up allowance to ensure that participants did not receive less than they would on welfare. The orientation program was a response to complaints that the whole process was baffling to new participants. As well, more training was offered to the case manager and career counsellors.

Cost–Benefit Research

Cost–benefit research will be conducted. It will include the perspectives of social assistance recipients, governments and the general population. Both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits will be measured

Outcome Data

Data are being collected to trace the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance
- the number of participants who get jobs
- the proportion of participants who leave social assistance
- the proportion of participants who get jobs
- the extent to which program participants retain the jobs they get
- the time required to find a job
- the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare
- the nature of full-time jobs obtained by program participants
- the level of jobs (entry level, pay level and skill level) obtained by program participants
- the types of occupations obtained by program participants
- employment earnings
- family income
- changes in job readiness

Information is also being collected on other aspects of family well-being, focusing on preschool and school aged children and their parents.

Participant Evaluation

Participants' level of satisfaction with the program is being assessed.

Use of Findings

Evaluation results will be used to assist in the design of new programs.

A number of problems have been raised thus far during ongoing evaluations:

- More attention must be given to participant recruitment and selection.
- Frequent communication with case managers and instructors is important to the success of case management.
- A budgeting workshop for participants is needed.
- The three-year limit on participant enrolment is a significant constraint.
- The case plan needs to be thorough, consisting of an assessment and an action plan that should identify the type of program or intervention most appropriate for each recipient before enrolment in NB Works.
- A greater choice of work placements is needed, coupled with a better understanding by participants of the purposes of the initial job placement.
- There needs to be better communication between management and field staff.
- The responsibilities of the program and the rights and responsibilities of the participants must be clearly outlined to participants at the outset.
- The management information system needs refinement.
- There may be a need for a pre–NB Works project for those social assistance recipients who require a well-structured approach to life skills training.
- It must be recognized that most participants face significant barriers to employment; thus, program success should be understood in this context.
- NB Works has one primary model, which it applies to all participants. Many participants will not conform to this model, as evidenced by a significant drop-out rate.
- A variety of exit-related program activities should be developed to better meet the needs of participants.

Much of what has been learned from NB Works, particularly concerning continuous case management, is being applied in HRDNB. HRDNB now has trained personnel with experience gained from the project. There is better knowledge of program tools and how to use them. NB Works was the perfect learning opportunity for the development of Skills, Loans and Grants, a program now being drafted, wherein the principles of case management and long-term planning to move participants through upgrading and training will be applied. Also, a new program, Youth Futures, will deliver employment development services to young people using the same approach as NB Works. Case management has become the way of working with social assistance recipients in New Brunswick.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

NB Works

As of November 1997, the NB Works demonstration project had run down. By that time all participants had exhausted their 156 weeks of eligibility for Employment Insurance training allowances. The only component of this project that remains is its evaluation, which is being conducted throughout the next few years. The final summary evaluation report is expected early in 2001. Although NB Works in its original form cannot be replicated because of changes in Employment Insurance legislation and the demise of the Canada Assistance Plan, valuable lessons learned from project have been integrated into the department's service delivery framework.

NB Case

HRDNB has recently been restructured. Included in the transformation was the development of a new management information system, NB Case. This new service delivery model is a recipient-driven, results-based approach to services. It transfers ownership and responsibility for success to the recipient, with government and community agencies providing the necessary supports. At the same time, the province has significantly increased the number of case management staff. This change in approach will result in a greater number of recipients being case managed. The case-management process developed under NB Works was the basis for this refined approach to service delivery.

Education and Training Strategy

HRDNB is developing an Education and Training Strategy that will guide the department in meeting its mandate of assisting recipients in their move to self-sufficiency. This strategy will take into consideration the changing landscape within which the department works. The Education and Training Strategy will focus on educational upgrading, job referrals, subsidized employment and greater recipient responsibility for training past the high school level:

- The case plan will be the fundamental tool setting the course for the recipient.
- The focus will be on early intervention, ensuring that each recipient is actively working toward leaving the system from the day that he or she enters it. Educational upgrading will be a key element of intervention.
- Referral to short-term employment will be used, as this approach has proven to be a springboard to self-sufficiency.
- Employment development for recipients will be an important function of the department. That development will include promotion, public relations and the identification of potential employers.

Canada–New Brunswick Labour Market Development Agreement

New Brunswick has a long history of cooperation between the federal and provincial governments, at both regional and local levels, which has resulted in innovative partnerships such as NB Job Corps and NB Works. The Canada–New Brunswick Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) was built on this tradition of cooperation.

Under the LMDA, which was signed on December 13, 1996, New Brunswick assumed responsibility for the design and delivery of active employment benefits and measures supported by Employment Insurance funds. Implementation by HRDNB and the New Brunswick Department of Labour began on April 1, 1997.

The recipient base to be served under this agreement includes active Employment Insurance claimants and "reach-back" recipients as defined in the Employment Insurance Act. As a result, the recipient base to be served by HRDNB has been widened substantially from the social assistance caseload. Federal employment counselling staff were transferred to the province to deal with this additional caseload.

The Employment Insurance Act requires that contributions be made only toward the cost of programs that are similar to those established by the Commission and that are consistent with the purposes and guidelines set out in the Act. The New Brunswick programs include the following:

- **Partners**, which will use a wage subsidy mechanism
- the **Earnings Supplement** program, which is being designed based on the findings of ongoing national pilots
- the **Entrepreneur Program**, which will amalgamate the province's existing loan program with the self-employment component
- **Job Action**, which will provide work experience for Employment Insurance recipients in support of obtaining long-term employment
- **Skills, Loans and Grants**, which will support recipients in obtaining skills for employment
- the **Adjustment Services Initiative,** which will deliver labour market partnership activities to support research, planning and other activities by community partners or industry to address challenges and opportunities in human resource development
- **Employment Assistance Services,** which will be accessible to all unemployed individuals and provided by third-party contracts
- **Research and Innovations,** whereby New Brunswick will conduct activities, experiments and research to address labour market development, policy and design issues

New Brunswick has also assumed responsibility for National Employment Service functions, which include employment counselling, service needs determination, labour exchange, labour market adjustment and the management and support of these functions. Employment counselling and service needs determination are delivered to recipients by HRDNB staff through local offices. Labour exchange and labour market adjustment services are delivered by the staff of the Department of Labour from both the central office and local offices.

Contact

NAME:	Elaine Campbell
TITLE:	Programs Consultant for Evaluation
ADDRESS:	Human Resources Development New Brunswick P.O. Box 6000 Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1
E-MAIL:	
TELEPHONE:	(506) 453-3250
FAX:	(506) 453-2152

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Index of Acronyms

DAEL - Department of Advanced Education and Labour
LMDA - Labour Market Development Agreement
HRDCNB - Human Resources Development New Brunswick

QUÉBEC

Summary

In 1989, the Province of Quebec introduced two new "last resort" income security programs – one for recipients with severe employment restrictions (which offered financial support) and the APTE program (which stands for Positive Action for Work and Employment), designed to integrate or reintegrate employable persons into the workforce.

In June 1995, Minister Blackburn who is responsible for social services, undertook an extensive review of the income security system and on December 10, 1996, she tabled a green paper entitled ***A Path Toward Integration, Training and Employment***. The recommended reforms to APTE were stimulated by the considerable increase in the number of unemployed people receiving income security benefits. This phenomenon was attributable to a number of factors, including the loss of full-time, full-year jobs in Quebec, amendments to Employment Insurance which reduced eligibility for many people, the elimination of low skill jobs and their replacement with higher skill jobs, and an increase in activity in the "underground economy."

In recent years, an ever-increasing number of young people and single-parent families have joined the ranks of social assistance recipients in Quebec. In February 1997, 543,454 adults and 250,072 children were in receipt of income security benefits.

The 1996 reforms were focused on integrating social assistance recipients into the labor force through active measures. They were intended to improve equity between social assistance recipients and low-income workers, and they redefined the obligations of the community regarding the reintegration of recipients into the workforce, ensuring that more services would be taken over locally.

Quebec's program reforms are designed to provide individuals with a plan for their gradual integration into the labor force through training and employment programs. They are targeted to all "employable" recipients, including people living with disabilities who wish to be in the workforce. Those who are considered ineligible for work, i.e., the disabled, the elderly and children, will fall under the jurisdiction of the Quebec Pension Plan. However, in June 1997, programs under the new reform had not yet been identified and APTE was still in place.

Income security recipients now have access to a range of measures, including training activities and educational and apprenticeship programs which are aimed at enhancing employability and integrating people into the workforce. Specific activities include:

- educational measures – academic upgrading (RS)[1], support for single parents to enrol in post-secondary education (REPS)
- preparation and job integration measures – job experience (EXTRA), external labor services (SEMO), employability enhancement activities (RADE), self-employment support (SEA), an employment integration assistance program (PAIE), and a young volunteers program

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[1] The French acronyms appear in this paragraph for reference purposes. See page 121 for a list of the full titles of these programs.

- federal-provincial on-site measures (direct purchasing, personalized training, work transition, employment development projects)
- measures to assist and advise job seekers (AGIR, OPTIONS).

A strategic initiative known as APPORT (which provides assistance to parents to supplement their employment income) was implemented in 1995 and is intended to assist low-income parents keep their jobs and help parents receiving income security reintegrate into the job market. The supplement paid under the APPORT program varies depending upon the number of persons in the family, income, child care and housing expenses.

The Department of Employment and Solidarity was established in May 1997, replacing the Department of Income Security. It brought together under one roof the delivery of placement services, Employment Insurance, active job market measures and support for job searches. This was done to reduce the fragmentation of employment services, to streamline administration and improve cost efficiency. Unlike the practice in previous years, the new department provides local stakeholders with a lot of leeway and it supports regional efforts to find solutions to the employment crisis.

The government has a more coordinated approach among all of its departments than in the past to deliver services which will reduce long-term dependency on social assistance. Measures such as the integrated child benefit, drug insurance and child-care services increase assistance to low-income parents in the labor force, and decrease incentives to go on income security. Services for toddlers and child-care expense allowances are extremely important, especially for single parents. The new integrated child benefit enables all low-income families (whether on social assistance or not) to receive maximum assistance for their children.

The Quebec government has also taken over delivery of Employment Insurance under a five-year agreement with the federal government signed in 1997. The government says that this $3 billion dollar agreement will ensure stable and adequate financing for the implementation of active job assistance measures during this period.

The Department of Employment and Solidarity is offering financial incentives in the form of subsidies to participating employers who take on income security recipients. Participants in the APTE program who participate in a designated measure, even if it is not mandatory, are entitled to higher benefits. The recipient can withdraw from the program without penalty for a valid reason (such as a lack of child-care services, for example). The Act does compel the recipient to seek employment, and those refusing to do so or who turn down a job offer may face penalties. With the assistance of services offered by the local employment centre, the person must develop a personal employment plan. Once the new program is in place, persons aged 18 to 24 in receipt of income security will be required to enrol. This program will be offered on a priority basis to single parents and to other recipients on a voluntary basis. It will be phased in according to the anticipated expansion of child-care services under Quebec's family policy that was announced in 1997.

The frequency and intensity of the follow-up may vary, depending on the availability of social service officers, and the lack of availability is a constraint at the present time. With the Parcours program, a tighter support structure is planned and staff will be hired for this purpose. Eligibility criteria are also aimed at avoiding instances where those taking part in a Department of Employment and Solidarity measure will replace workers who already have employment in the local economy.

Programmes d'intégration au marché du travail

Programmes

Actions positives pour le travail et l'emploi (APTE), Aide aux parents pour leurs revenus de travail (APPORT), et PARCOURS.

Description

La Loi sur la sécurité du revenu, adoptée en 1989, a institué deux programmes différents d'aide de dernier recours, l'un pour les prestataires qui présentent des contraintes sévères à l'emploi (Soutien financier) et l'autre pour ceux susceptibles de réintégrer le marché du travail (APTE).

Pour les personnes aptes au travail, le recours à la sécurité du revenu est considéré comme une période de développement pendant laquelle elles mobilisent leurs ressources pour retrouver le plus rapidement possible une autonomie financière par le travail. Le programme Actions positives pour le travail et l'emploi (APTE) vise à leur apporter une aide financière temporaire en attendant qu'elles puissent réintégrer le marché du travail. Il a aussi pour objectif de faciliter l'intégration ou la réintégration au marché du travail de ces personnes.

La raison d'être des programmes d'intégration

Au Québec, le développement de l'employabilité des prestataires de la sécurité du revenu n'est pas une préoccupation nouvelle.

- Les premières «mesures de relance», mises sur pied en 1984, visent à trouver des solutions face au chômage endémique qui sévit chez les jeunes et à rendre les jeunes prestataires plus compétitifs sur le marché du travail. Le ministère de la Sécurité du Revenu met en place trois mesures de relance : rattrapage scolaire, travaux communautaires et stages en milieu de travail.
- Cinq ans plus tard en 1989, c'est l'entrée en vigueur de la Loi sur la sécurité du revenu. Il s'agit d'un virage important. Ce n'est plus l'âge qui détermine le niveau d'aide financière, mais bien la situation du prestataire. La nouvelle structure des barèmes comporte une incitation à participer.
- En juin 1995, la Ministre Blackburn amorce une réforme en profondeur du régime de la sécurité du revenu et le 10 décembre 1996, il y a dépôt du livre vert intitulé *Un parcours vers l'insertion, la formation et l'emploi*. Cette nouvelle réforme est devenue nécessaire en raison de l'augmentation considérable du nombre de chômeurs et chômeuses à la

sécurité de revenu. Ce phénomène est attribuable à la hausse du chômage, aux emplois précaires, aux nouvelles compétences exigées par le marché du travail de même qu'à l'étendue du travail et de la consommation «au noir».

Ce livre vert précise les grandes orientations de cette nouvelle réforme :

- intégrer la main-d'oeuvre prestataire de la sécurité du revenu à l'ensemble de la main d'oeuvre québécoise;
- privilégier les mesures actives;
- favoriser le passage vers le statut de travailleur et travailleuse;
- intensifier les actions préventives;
- améliorer l'équité entre les prestataires et les travailleurs à faible revenu;
- redéfinir les obligations de la collectivité en ce qui concerne la réinsertion à l'emploi des prestataires par rapport au développement de l'emploi;
- assurer une plus grande prise en charge des services au niveau local.

Les prestataires, y compris les personnes handicapées ayant des limites fonctionnelles mais qui entendent demeurer actives sur le marché du travail, seront graduellement intégrés dans un parcours individualisé vers l'insertion, la formation et l'emploi. Les personnes pour qui des mesures de protection sociale s'imposent, soient les personnes invalides, les aînés et les enfants, seront dorénavant sous l'administration de la Régie des rentes du Québec.

En juin 1997, les programmes qui seront institués dans le cadre de la nouvelle réforme n'avaient cependant pas encore été identifiés et APTE était toujours en vigueur.

Objectifs du programme APTE

- réduire le nombre de dossiers d'aide sociale;
- réduire les coûts globaux de l'assistance sociale;
- favoriser la réinsertion des personnes sur le marché du travail;
- développer des compétences chez les participants, lorsque ces compétences peuvent s'acquérir dans un laps de temps relativement court, c'est-à-dire en deux ou trois ans;
- rendre l'emploi plus attrayant d'un point de vue financier que l'assistance sociale;
- encourager des liens durables avec le marché du travail;
- réduire la dépendance à long terme à l'assistance sociale;
- réduire la pauvreté;
- contribuer à la création d'emplois.

De plus en plus au Québec, l'ensemble des politiques gouvernementales sont coordonnées afin de réduire, à long terme, la dépendance à l'assistance sociale. Des mesures telles la prestation intégrée pour enfants et l'assurance médicaments augmentent l'aide aux enfants pour les parents à faible revenu pour contourner les incitatifs à avoir recours à la sécurité du revenu.

Les activités du programme

L'activité principale

L'activité principale est de faciliter la (ré)insertion sur le marché du travail. Un éventail de mesures offre aux prestataires de la sécurité du revenu de la formation, l'accès à l'éducation ainsi que la possibilité de faire des stages en milieu de travail. Il s'agit des mesures de préparation et d'intégration à l'emploi, des mesures d'appoint, des activités fédérales-provinciales de formation et d'intégration à l'emploi ainsi que des initiatives stratégiques.

L'ensemble de mesures de Développement de l'employabilité et d'intégration à l'emploi (DE-IE) constitue cependant le moyen privilégié pour faciliter l'atteinte de l'objectif de réinsertion sur le marché du travail. Ces mesures visent l'acquisition de compétences liées aux exigences de l'emploi et pour lesquelles il y a une demande sur le marché du travail. Le but poursuivi est l'obtention d'emplois stables, au salaire minimum, qui permettent une sortie de l'aide sociale.

Pour l'ensemble de ces mesures, la pertinence de participer à cette activité doit avoir été établie par un représentant du ministère, dans le cadre d'un plan d'action.

Mesures de scolarisation

L'ensemble des mesures de scolarisation permettent l'accès à de la formation pouvant mener jusqu'à l'obtention d'un diplôme postsecondaire. En réalité, la majorité des prestataires qui prennent part aux mesures de scolarisation complètent une formation professionnelle qui donne accès à des métiers tels caissier, commis d'épicerie, magasinier, téléphoniste, aide-pâtissier, cuisinier, entretien des chambres, fabrication de meubles, garde de sécurité.

- *Rattrapage scolaire (RS)* Le Rattrapage scolaire est une mesure DE-IE qui offre une formation personnalisée et accélérée pouvant aller jusqu'à l'obtention d'un diplôme d'études secondaires (formation générale) ou permet de compléter des études en formation professionnelle pouvant aller jusqu'à l'obtention d'un diplôme d'études professionnelles (DEP) ou d'une attestation de spécialisation professionnelle. Cette mesure est destinée aux adultes prestataires de la sécurité du revenu qui ont quitté les études régulières à plein temps depuis au moins 24 mois. Pour être admissible à la formation professionnelle, les personnes doivent avoir été prestataires de la sécurité du revenu pour un total de 24 mois au cours des 36 derniers mois.
- ***Retour aux études postsecondaires pour les chefs de famille monoparentale (REPS)*** Il s'agit d'une mesure DE-IE destinée aux chefs de famille monoparentale afin de favoriser leur retour aux études et augmenter ainsi leurs possibilités d'intégration sur le marché du travail grâce à une formation scolaire accrue. La mesure REPS permet de compléter un programme d'études à plein temps de niveau postsecondaire (collégial ou universitaire); la personne participante doit fréquenter un établissement reconnu par le Régime des prêts et bourses.

Mesures de préparation et d'insertion en emploi

- ***Expérience de travail (EXTRA)*** Mesure destinée à tout prestataire de la sécurité du revenu susceptible d'en tirer profit au niveau du développement ou du maintien de son employabilité. La personne est placée dans des situations concrètes au cours desquelles elle développe ses compétences de travail tout en s'engageant dans des activités communautaires utiles à sa collectivité. Quelques exemples de ces expériences de travail: soutien et support à des personnes en difficulté ou en perte d'autonomie; animation auprès de divers groupes; récupération de différentes matières recyclables; nettoyage de sites naturels; travail dans des comptoirs de vêtements et banques alimentaires. Cette mesure d'une durée maximale de 12 mois peut exceptionnellement être prolongée jusqu'à 15 mois.

- ***Services externes de main d'oeuvre (SEMO)*** Cette mesure s'adresse aux personnes handicapées; aux femmes et aux jeunes en difficulté; à d'autres personnes en difficulté, comme les ex-alcooliques, les ex-détenus, les ex-toxicomanes, les ex-patients psychiatriques, etc. Elle permet d'intégrer ou réintégrer au marché du travail des personnes éprouvant des difficultés particulières au moyen de services spécialisés et adaptés à leurs besoins. Les organismes publics et parapublics, les municipalités, les associations et partis politiques ne sont pas admissibles. Les SEMO sont tenus de desservir les prestataires de la sécurité du revenu dans une proportion minimale de 75% et la durée maximum est de 6 mois.

- ***Reconnaissance des activités de développement de l'employabilité (RADE)*** Cette mesure a comme objectif de favoriser l'accès le plus large possible à diverses activités de développement de l'employabilité offertes par des organismes externes au ministère de la Sécurité du revenu afin de faciliter une intégration éventuelle au marché de travail. Les corporations, entreprises ou organismes légalement constitués sont admissibles. Les activités doivent préparer les participantes et les participants à occuper un emploi, y compris des activités d'orientation et de soutien à la recherche d'emploi, de nombreuses activités de formation (initiation à l'entreprenariat, lancement d'entreprises et préparation au démarrage d'entreprises). Les bénéficiaires de cette mesure sont les adultes prestataires de la sécurité du revenu. La durée maximum est de 12 mois, exceptionnellement de 15 mois.

- ***Soutien à l'emploi autonome (SEA)*** Mesure destinée aux prestataires de la sécurité du revenu, travailleurs et travailleuses à faible revenu (recevant ou non des prestations du programme APPORT), conjoint-es de travailleurs(ses) à faible revenu. Les employeurs/organismes admissibles sont les entreprises indépendantes, ou micro entreprises, offrant du travail à plein temps à 3 personnes ou moins, en comptant le propriétaire.

On offre du soutien aux personnes qui veulent créer ou développer leur emploi ou leur entreprise pour leur permettre de retrouver leur autonomie financière. On aide les travailleurs autonomes qui touchent un supplément à rentabiliser leur entreprise existante. Une période d'une durée maximale de 6 mois est prévue pour la préparation d'un plan d'affaires; un suivi et un parrainage sont assurés pendant une période de 12 mois.

- ***Programme d'aide à l'intégration en emploi (PAIE)*** Mesure destinée aux personnes ayant cumulé 6 mois à la sécurité du revenu au cours des 12 derniers mois, aux chefs de famille monoparentale et aux personnes âgées de 45 ans et plus, dès leur inscription à la sécurité du revenu, aux participants à une mesure de développement de l'employabilité désignée par le Ministre, lorsqu'ils ont atteint les objectifs fixés dans le cadre de cette mesure et aux participants à la mesure Impact Jeunesse, âgés de 30 ans et moins. Elle a comme objectif de permettre l'accès à des emplois rémunérés pour les prestataires de la sécurité du revenu qui éprouvent des difficultés particulières à intégrer le marché du travail. PAIE entraîne une sortie de l'aide sociale, puisque les participants sont salariés et qu'ils reçoivent une rémunération au moins équivalente au salaire minimum. Les employeurs admissibles sont les entreprises, corporations, organismes à but lucratif ou non lucratif, municipalités et organismes du secteur municipal, travailleurs autonomes. Durée de 26 semaines jusqu'à 52 semaines selon la nature de l'emploi.

- ***Jeunes volontaires*** Programme administré entièrement par la Société québécoise de développement de la main d'oeuvre (SQDM) et destiné aux jeunes âgés de 16 à 29 ans, sans emploi régulier à plein temps et qui ont cessé leurs études à temps complet. Ce programme est considéré comme une mesure désignée et s'adresse à plusieurs clientèles, dont des prestataires de l'assurance-chômage ou de la sécurité du revenu et des jeunes adultes sans revenu. Les projets peuvent être réalisés dans différents domaines : environnement, éducation, santé et services sociaux, loisirs, sports, sciences et technologies et un projet peut comporter jusqu'à 7 jeunes adultes.

- ***Perspectives d'emploi*** Il s'agit cette fois d'une activité fédérale-provinciale qui fournit aux participants des débouchés menant à un emploi stable. Emploi à temps plein où il y a une possibilité raisonnable de permanence après la fin de l'aide financière accordée; travail dans un secteur professionnel ou industriel où les possibilités d'embauche sont bonnes. La durée varie de 80 heures à 52 semaines.

Mesures de formation

Les achats directs de formation en établissement, la formation sur mesure en établissement, les projets de formation et Transition travail sont des activités fédérales-provinciales de formation et d'intégration à l'emploi. Ces activités sont en baisse : de 2000 en 1995, on est passé à 500 en 1997.

Achats directs de formation en établissement

Le but est de permettre aux participants d'acquérir de nouvelles compétences, d'améliorer leurs aptitudes à l'emploi, d'effectuer du rattrape scolaire ou d'apprendre l'une des 2 langues officielles en vue de faciliter l'intégration à l'emploi. Formation professionnelle; formation générale, formation linguistique; diverses activités d'orientation et de préparation à l'emploi offertes dans des établissements généralement du secteur public, de niveau secondaire et collégial, dont la durée varie de quelques semaines jusqu'à un maximum de 52 semaines, à temps plein.

Formation sur mesure en établissement (Volet Employabilité)

Le but est d'augmenter les compétences des participants et de les préparer à un éventuel retour sur le marché du travail. Cette mesure cessera d'exister dès la fin des activités en cours. Formation professionnelle; activité d'appoint favorisant la formation et l'intégration au marché du travail.

Projets de formation

Permet aux personnes éprouvant de sérieuses difficultés sur le plan de l'emploi à acquérir des compétences favorisant l'obtention d'un emploi. Les projets peuvent comprendre une combinaison des éléments suivants: formation professionnelle, counselling d'emploi, orientation professionnelle; techniques de recherche d'emploi; initiation au marché du travail; counselling personnel (connaissance de soi, dynamique de vie). Tous les projets doivent comprendre une alternance de formation sur les lieux et hors des lieux de travail. La durée varie de 20 semaines jusqu'à un maximum de 52 semaines à temps plein. Offerts dans des établissements publics ou privés, par le biais des coordonnateurs de projets. La SQDM approuve les plans de formation et fait le suivi en cours de formation.

Transition travail

Mesure qui s'adresse aux femmes qui n'ont jamais accédé au marché du travail ou qui ont quitté le marché du travail depuis un certain temps et qui permet aux participantes d'acquérir des connaissances, de développer des habitudes et attitudes favorisant leur intégration professionnelle. Activités de counselling d'emploi, aide à la recherche d'emploi, orientation scolaire et professionnelle. La durée est de 30 heures par semaine pendant 5 semaines.

Projets de développement de l'emploi

L'objectif est de contribuer à l'adaptation des travailleurs, en leur offrant une formation et une expérience de travail qui leur permettra de trouver un emploi stable dans un secteur où il y a des possibilités d'embauche. Les projets ont à la fois une composante formation et une composante expérience de travail. La formation représente au moins 20% du temps consacré à l'ensemble du projet; la formation théorique et pratique, hors production, doit être d'une durée supérieure à 45 heures et doit être approuvée par la SQDM. Mesure qui s'étend de 16 à 52 semaines.

Mesures d'aide conseil à la recherche d'emploi

Ces mesures consistent en activités intensives et de courte durée, de type aide-conseil ou recherche d'emploi. Elles visent à faciliter une démarche d'intégration au marché du travail, une participation aux mesures désignées et à permettre au prestataire de réfléchir à son employabilité.

- *AGIR* Activité pour l'intégration par la recherche d'emploi qui vise à favoriser l'intégration à l'emploi de prestataires non participants. Au moment de la référence, le prestataire est non participant et jugé prêt à intégrer le marché du travail. Il s'agit d'un outil que le ministère de la Sécurité du revenu offre afin d'augmenter l'efficacité des efforts pour trouver un emploi. AGIR prévoit cinq rencontres de groupe avec d'autres personnes qui sont dans la même situation de recherche d'emploi et offre une aide personnalisée et une aide financière supplémentaire. AGIR remonte à 1995 et est estimée avoir de bons résultats. Cette mesure permet de rejoindre plusieurs jeunes.
- *OPTIONS* Démarche en individuel, dans les jours suivant la demande d'aide financière. Elle permet d'évaluer les raisons de la demande d'aide financière, de dresser le bilan de démarches réalisées avant de recourir à cette aide et d'élaborer un plan d'action. Le plan d'action sert à entreprendre ou compléter une formation professionnelle ou postsecondaire si la personne a les acquis nécessaires et le désire, ou bien, à participer à des activités de recherche d'emploi en recevant du soutien dans cette recherche. La durée de l'activité est variable en fonction de la situation et des besoins de la personne rencontrée.

Initiative stratégique APPORT

L'Aide aux parents pour leurs revenus de travail (APPORT) est une initiative stratégique qui procure un supplément aux revenus de travail des parents dont le revenu brut ne dépasse pas 26 000$ et ayant au moins un enfant à charge. Elle offre un supplément aux revenus de travail des parents prestataires de l'aide de dernier recours qui réintègrent le marché du travail.

Cette initiative vise à aider les parents à faible revenu à garder leur emploi et à appuyer les parents prestataires de l'aide sociale dans leur démarche de réintégration du marché de l'emploi. Le supplément payé sous le programme APPORT varie selon le nombre de personnes dans la famille et la situation familiale, les revenus, les frais de garde et les coûts du logement. Le supplément augmente jusqu'à un niveau déterminé selon la situation familiale puis régresse pour s'arrêter dès que la famille paye un dollar en impôt provincial sur le revenu.

Le programme a été mis en vigueur en 1995 pour une durée prévue de 3 ans et un coût anticipé de 54 millions. Actuellement 25 000 familles participent au programme APPORT. Le Québec a indiqué son intention d'augmenter ce nombre à 35 000 familles participantes, le plus tôt possible.

Élaboration et mise en application du programme

Responsabilité de la conception et de la mise en application

Le ministère de la Sécurité du Revenu (qui cesse d'exister sous ce nom en mai 1997), est chargé d'élaborer les programmes visant à répondre aux besoins financiers de la clientèle bénéficiant de la sécurité du revenu et à favoriser sa réinsertion sociale et professionnelle.

Les services publics d'emploi, jusqu'à tout récemment, étaient offerts aux différentes clientèles par les Centres Travail-Québec, la Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre (SQDM) et le ministère du Développement des ressources humaines du Canada. En 1997, on dénombrait pas moins de 117 mesures d'aide dispersées entre les 2 ordres de gouvernements et une douzaine de ministères et d'organismes québécois s'occupant de la gestion de ces mesures. La multiplicité des groupes intervenant dans les questions liées a l'emploi ainsi que la dispersion des actions publiques, privées et communautaires relatives au marché du travail conduisent à la fragmentation des services d'emploi au Québec. Cette dispersion des interventions sur le marché du travail et cette fragmentation des services de l'emploi sont parmi les causes majeures de la complexité, de la lourdeur administrative, de l'inefficacité des dépenses de main-d'oeuvre ainsi que de leur difficulté à répondre aux besoins de la population. Cet éparpillement engendre des chevauchements administratifs coûteux.

Le 15 mai 1997, le gouvernement du Québec crée le Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité. La création de ce nouveau ministère intègre au sein d'une même institution les services de placement, la gestion de l'Assurance-emploi, les mesures actives du marché du travail, de même que le soutien de l'activité de recherche d'emploi. Ce nouveau ministère aura double mission: la promotion et le soutien du développement de la main-d'oeuvre et de l'emploi par l'intermédiaire d'une politique active du marché du travail et la mise en oeuvre des politiques et des mesures d'aide financière et de soutien du revenu.

Marge de manoeuvre locale dans l'élaboration et la mise en application des programmes
Contrairement aux dernières années, durant lesquelles l'analyse des problèmes de l'emploi de même que l'élaboration des programmes d'action s'étaient essentiellement faites au palier central, le nouveau régime consacre l'importance du palier local en matière d'économie et d'emploi et donne une grande marge de manoeuvre aux intervenant locaux. Cette nouvelle réforme repose essentiellement sur la mobilisation et la valorisation des possibilités d'un milieu, sur le dynamisme individuel et collectif dans la recherche de solutions à la crise de l'emploi et du développement.

Dans le cadre de la nouvelle réforme, les interventions en matière de main-d'oeuvre prendront appui sur le développement local et les partenariats qui devront être développés à tous les niveaux. Les centres locaux d'emploi constitueront la base du réseau québécois de services d'emploi.

Dans le programme actuel, la marge de manoeuvre des régions se situe dans la manière d'utiliser les budgets mais elle comporte aussi l'obligation de respecter des normes très précises. La nouvelle réforme envisage plutôt la gestion par fonds, des programmes qui auront moins de normes, des critères qui sont beaucoup moins restreints et des balises qui permettent plus de latitude. Il est cependant trop tôt encore pour préciser l'étendue de la marge de manoeuvre qu'auront les régions avec le nouveau programme Parcours.

Durée du programme
Le programme APTE a été mis sur pied suite à l'adoption de la loi sur la Sécurité du revenu en 1989. Il est encore trop tôt pour dire si le programme APTE sera remplacé par un autre programme dans le cadre de la nouvelle réforme.

Le programme Parcours demeure à l'étape d'un plan d'action global et les programmes ou les activités n'ont pas encore été nommés, ou définis de façon précise. Il est prévu que les mesures dans le cadre de Parcours seront définies d'ici 6 mois.

Sources de financement et coûts du programme

La participation à des programmes d'employabilité comprend des incitatifs, et ce à la fois pour les prestataires et pour les employeurs. Pour le prestataire, elle prend la forme d'allocation pour la participation et pour l'employeur, elle se traduit le plus souvent par une subvention.

Incitatifs financiers offerts aux participants
Le montant d'aide financière alloué au prestataire est calculé en fonction de sa participation ou non à une mesure désignée dans le cadre du programme APTE. La participation à un programme donne droit à la prestation la plus élevée. Pour l'ensemble de ces mesures :

- le prestataire du programme APTE reçoit la prestation de participation dès le mois suivant le début de sa participation. Pour une personne seule ou une famille monoparentale, cette prestation est supérieure de 120$ à la prestation de base à l'aide sociale.
- le prestataire du programme Soutien financier reçoit une prestation spéciale de 100$ par mois pour toute la durée de sa participation.
- la personne participante est aussi éligible à des prestations spéciales pour couvrir notamment les frais de garde (max 10$/jour/enfant), et les frais encourus selon la nature de la mesure tels les frais de services complémentaires, les frais d'admission; les frais scolaires réellement encourus (inscription, matériel didactique, fournitures scolaires, etc.); si le besoin est reconnu, les frais d'un seul déménagement (maximum 500$).
- le carnet de réclamation ou carte médicaments est accordé à des personnes ou des familles qui ne sont plus admissibles à l'aide sociale à cause d'un changement de leur situation ou de l'augmentation de leurs ressources. Il s'agit de personnes ou familles qui sont déjà en bonne voie de réinsertion ou de réintégration au marché du travail et à l'égard de qui il convient de maintenir une certaine sécurité relative aux frais de santé.
- un prestataire peut continuer de bénéficier des services dentaires et pharmaceutiques accordés en vertu des articles 9 et 21 de la Loi si, au moment où il a cessé d'être admissible à l'aide, il participait à une mesure désignée comportant la fréquentation à temps complet d'un établissement collégial ou universitaire, il participait à un programme de subvention salariale établi par le ministère et qui est la cause de son inadmissibilité, il a gagné des revenus de travail provenant de l'exercice d'un travail saisonnier et causant son inadmissibilité, il est chef d'une famille monoparentale et il intègre le marché du travail

Subventions offertes aux employeurs

Des subventions peuvent être accordées par le ministère aux organismes participants et certaines mesures prévoient qu'une allocation soit aussi offerte par l'employeur, aux participants.

- Dans le cadre de RADE, le ministère peut verser à l'organisme offrant les activités reconnues une allocation de 20$ par mois par participant pour couvrir certains frais administratifs;
- Une allocation mensuelle peut aussi être versée par le promoteur du projet à la personne participant à une mesure EXTRA et le ministère peut verser à l'organisme à but non lucratif une subvention pouvant atteindre 100$ par mois par participant afin de couvrir les frais de supervision des personnes participantes et de gestion de projet;

- Les non-prestataires qui participent à SEMO peuvent recevoir une allocation maximale de 8$ par jour pendant 50 jours. Durant les stages d'immersion, le salaire minimum est versé par le SEMO pour une durée maximum de 6 semaines. L'organisme reconnu reçoit du ministère une subvention modulée en fonction des clientèles qu'il dessert;
- PAIE offre les subventions suivantes :
  - secteur privé et municipal; 50% du salaire brut versé jusqu'à concurrence de 120$ par semaine;
  - participants aux mesures Impact Jeunesse et SEA et organismes à but non lucratif: 100% du salaire minimum en vigueur jusqu'à concurrence de 238$ par semaine (le salaire minimum au Québec est de 6,80$ de l'heure au 1er octobre 97)
  - le prestataire a droit de recevoir le carnet de réclamation pour une période d'au plus 6 mois (sauf exception).
- SEA : La SQDM peut octroyer un montant maximal de 500$ pour des ressources conseils ou des expertises particulières requises au cours de la 1ère année d'exploitation. Le prestataire de la sécurité du revenu reçoit une subvention PAIE au cours de la 1ère année d'exploitation de son entreprise et bénéficie du carnet de réclamation durant cette même période. La personne dont le projet aura été accepté par le comité régional peut bénéficier d'une garantie de prêts offerte par la SQDM.

Financement des programmes
En vertu de l'entente Canada-Québec relative au marché du travail et afin d'assurer un financement stable et adéquat pour la mise en place de mesures actives d'aide à l'emploi, le gouvernement du Canada versera au gouvernement du Québec près de 3 milliards à partir du Compte d'Assurance-emploi pour les 5 premières années d'application de l'entente (1997-2002).

Même si le nouveau dispositif fédéral a l'avantage d'accroître la latitude du gouvernement du Québec quant à la conception et la mise en oeuvre du son régime de la sécurité du revenu, il n'en demeure pas moins que le financement fédéral pour les programmes sociaux a été fortement réduit sans tenir compte de l'évolution des besoins. Il prive le gouvernement du Québec d'un manque à gagner de 636 millions de dollars en 96-97 et de plus de 1,2 milliard de dollars en 97-98. De plus, les restrictions successives apportées à l'Assurance-chômage entre 90-94 ont amené 30 000 ménages à avoir recours à la sécurité du revenu. Les récentes modifications introduites par la Loi sur l'Assurance-emploi ainsi que celles à venir le 5 janvier prochain auront une incidence à la hausse sur le nombre de ménages dépendant de l'aide sociale.

Cette situation a donc entraîné des coupures budgétaires et on a dû à la fois réduire le personnel et diminuer le nombre de personnes à qui l'on donne accès aux mesures.

Coupures budgétaires (en millions de dollars)

La sécurité du revenu	95-96	96-97
APTE	2 642 583 500	2 636 436 600
SOUTIEN FINANCIER	837 971 900	869 860 700
APPORT	58 984 000	65 565 900

Le développement de l'employabilité	95-96	96-97
RS	34 130 700	28 501 800
SMT (Stages en milieu de travail)	4 664 500	1 178 400
EXTRA	33 254 500	19 789 200
REPS	3 261 800	3 427 900
RADE	17 414 600	12 514 900
AUTRES MESURES	19 069 100	17 342 000

L'aide à l'emploi	95-96	96-97
SEMO	13 256 900	13 277 600
PAIE	75 663 400	65 235 500

Garde d'enfants subventionnée

Le programme actuellement en vigueur

Dans le programme actuel, on verse une allocation pour frais de garde dont le maximum est fixé à 10$ par jour par enfant à charge, sans excéder toutefois le coût réellement encouru :

- au chef de famille monoparentale participant à une mesure désignée dans un plan d'action;
- à une famille biparentale dont les deux conjoints participent à une telle mesure;
- à une famille biparentale dont un adulte participe à une mesure et l'autre adulte est incapable pour raison de santé, attesté par certificat médical, d'assumer cette garde.

Par ailleurs, les frais de garde peuvent faire l'objet d'un remboursement dans la mesure où les frais exigés par le service de garde à un prestataire de l'aide sociale sont les mêmes que ceux exigés à l'ensemble de sa clientèle pour un service équivalent. Ils sont payés à l'égard d'un enfant jusqu'au niveau primaire inclusivement quel que soit son âge.

Lorsqu'un conjoint participe à une mesure d'intégration en emploi et que l'autre conjoint travaille, les frais de garde sont considérés selon les dispositions du programme APPORT, s'il y a lieu. Les participants aux programmes SEMO peuvent, depuis le 1er août 1989, recevoir une prestation pour les frais de garde en vertu d'un programme de dernier recours.

Les participants au Rattrapage scolaire (RS) et au Retour aux études postsecondaires pour les chefs de famille monoparentale (REPS) peuvent continuer de recevoir les frais de garde pendant les vacances scolaires estivales, même s'ils perdent le barème de participation, à la condition qu'ils manifestent l'intention de poursuivre leur démarche de scolarisation et qu'ils sont dans l'obligation de payer les frais de garde afin de conserver leur place pur l'automne suivant.

La nouvelle réforme

Les orientations de la réforme reposent sur une réorganisation des services publics d'emploi notamment en intensifiant les actions préventives en matière de service de garde dans le cadre d'une politique familiale intégrée. Les services de garde et les services à la petite enfance sont donc d'une très grande importance dans l'objectif de conciliation des responsabilités familiales et professionnelles. Ils répondent à la fois aux besoins des enfants et des parents, particulièrement dans le cas des familles monoparentales.

L'introduction de la nouvelle allocation intégrée pour enfants est prévue pour septembre 1997. Le programme d'allocation familiale unifiée, l'assurance médicaments, les services de garde font partie des mesures favorisant l'insertion sur le marché du travail. Cette allocation, qui sera complètement distincte de la sécurité du revenu, permettra de combler les besoins de base des enfants, y compris les besoins particuliers des enfants de familles monoparentales, que leurs parents soient ou non prestataires de la sécurité du revenu. Elle permettra à toutes les familles à faible revenu de bénéficier de l'aide maximale à l'égard des enfants, alors qu'à présent seules les familles prestataires y ont droit.

Cette allocation regroupera la composante enfant de la sécurité du revenu et les allocations familiales. Établie sur la base du revenu familial de l'année précédente et ajustable en cours d'année en cas de changement majeur dans la situation ou dans le revenu familial, elle sera administrée par la Régie des rentes du Québec. L'allocation aura deux composantes :

- un montant de base, maximum dans le cas des familles à très faible revenu et qui diminue progressivement selon le revenu jusqu'à un niveau minimum;
- un supplément pour compenser les coûts supplémentaires d'une famille monoparentale.

Le programme APPORT continuera séparément, mais des modifications y seront apportées. On réduira notamment les montants alloués remplacés par l'allocation familiale unifiée.

Participants au programme

Critères d'admissibilité au programme

Le programme APTE s'adresse à tous les prestataires susceptibles de réintégrer le marché du travail. Les jeunes et les familles monoparentales sont ciblés plus particulièrement.

Les participants aux programmes selon le statut familial incluent les mères et les pères seuls, les jeunes mères et les jeunes pères seuls, les mères et les pères seuls plus âgés, les femmes mariées et hommes mariés avec enfants, les femmes et hommes adultes seuls, les jeunes femmes et les jeunes hommes seuls, les femmes mariées et les hommes mariés sans enfant, les personnes avec des personnes à charge autres que des enfants. Le parent qui a un enfant à charge d'âge pré-scolaire n'est pas tenu de participer.

Trois structures de barèmes sont prévues, correspondant aux 3 catégories de prestataires visées. Les barèmes sont déterminés selon les catégories suivantes : un barème de non disponibilité, un barème de participation, un barème de non-participation et un barème mixte.

- le *barème de non disponibilité* est accordé aux personnes qui ont des motifs sérieux de ne pas participer à une mesure désignée. Ce sont les personnes dont l'état physique ou mental les empêche pour une période d'au moins un mois complet de participer à une mesure.
- le *barème de participation*.
- le *barème de non participation* est attribué lorsqu'aucun autre barème ne peut être accordé. Lorsque la personne APTE refuse de participer, elle reçoit le barème de non participation, qui correspond à une réduction mensuelle de 150$.
- le *barème mixte* est accordé dans les cas où les 2 adultes d'une famille ne font pas partie de la même catégorie de prestataires, la situation de chaque adulte est prise en considération et se traduit par un barème mixte versé à la famille. Le barème mixte se divise en 3 catégories selon les combinaisons suivantes : un non-participant et un participant; un non-participant et un non-disponible; un non- disponible et un participant.

Les **jeunes et les familles monoparentales** sont ciblés plus particulièrement depuis 1989. La grave récession du début des années 80 a en effet forcé le gouvernement du Québec à trouver des solutions face au chômage endémique qui sévissait chez les jeunes. Ils étaient de plus en plus nombreux à joindre les rangs des assistés sociaux. À la même période, l'aide sociale était basée sur une structure de barèmes différents selon l'âge: les prestataires âges de 30 ans et plus avaient droit à un montant couvrant les besoins de base, alors que les plus jeunes ne pouvaient recevoir qu'une fraction de ce barème.

La conjoncture n'était pas favorable aux jeunes et l'on réclamait de plus en plus fort la parité de traitement avec les plus de 30 ans. Pour redresser la situation, le ministère a mis en place trois mesures de relance: Rattrapage scolaire, Travaux communautaires et Stages en milieu de travail (RS, TC et SMT). Initialement ces trois mesures s'adressaient uniquement aux prestataires âgés de moins de 30 ans. Rapidement on décida d'élargir l'admissibilité aux familles monoparentales qui avaient aussi des difficultés particulières à intégrer le marché du travail et qui étaient de plus en plus nombreuses à joindre les rangs des assistés sociaux.

En juin 1996, la sécurité du revenu avait dans ses rangs 43 594 jeunes de 18 à 24 ans aptes et disponibles à travailler et 37 459 jeunes adultes de 25-29 ans dans la même situation. L'ensemble de ces jeunes constituait 28% des adultes aptes et disponibles à travailler. Parmi ces jeunes, 58,6% n'ont pas atteint le niveau de la 5e année du secondaire. Pour ces raisons, Parcours ciblera encore davantage ces deux groupes.

Nombre de dossiers

On comptait au total 793 526 prestataires de la sécurité du revenu en février 1997, dont 543 454 adultes et 250 072 enfants. Âgés en moyenne de 37 ans, les adultes du programme APTE se composent de 52,6% de femmes. En moyenne, les personnes aptes ont une durée de présence cumulative de 6 ans à l'aide de dernier recours. En février 1997, on retrouve donc :

nombre d'adultes APTES	432 134	79,5%
non disponibles	140 336	25,8%
participants	32 562	6,0%
non participants	259 236	47,7%

Participation aux mesures désignées, juin 1997

- 32 363 adultes de l'aide de dernier recours participent à des mesures désignées, soit 23,3% de moins que l'année dernière. Le taux de participation des personne inscrites aux mesures désignées, qui se chiffre à 11,4% en juin, est en baisse par rapport à l'an dernier.
- Rattrapage scolaire (33.2%) et Expérience de travail (35,4%) sont les mesures désignées les plus fréquentes.
- L'âge moyen des adultes participants se situe à 34 ans.
- Les personnes seules y représentent 55,1%, les couples avec ou sans enfants 21,6% et les familles monoparentales 23,3%.
- 16,4% ont une scolarité de niveau collégial ou universitaire.
- 9 439 adultes nés hors du Canada participent à une mesure désignée, soit 29,2% de l'ensemble.

Accessibilité

Le programme devrait être en mesure de desservir tous ceux qui doivent participer. Dans les faits, les délais d'attente peuvent atteindre un an. Alors qu'en principe, tous ont accès aux mesures, l'objectif de premier plan demeure celui de favoriser l'intégration à l'emploi du plus grand nombre possible de personnes qui sont aptes au travail. Par conséquent :

- la clientèle APTE sera favorisée pour la participation aux mesures avant celle du programme Soutien financier;
- autant que possible, la demande du client qui a trouvé lui-même sa mesure et sa place dans cette mesure passe en priorité;
- en général, on recommandera les personnes ayant exprimé leur intérêt aux mesures, et dont les caractéristiques répondent le mieux à la demande des organismes partenaires.

En somme, si le nombre de places disponibles dans les mesures est insuffisant, une priorité sera accordée aux personnes les plus susceptibles d'en bénéficier pour s'intégrer à un emploi.

Nature de la participation au programme

Le programme vise à aider les personnes susceptibles de réintégrer le marché du travail dans leur démarche de réinsertion. La participation à une mesure désignée n'est pas obligatoire mais elle donne droit à une prestation plus élevée. Le participant peut aussi quitter le programme sans être pénalisé s'il y a une raison valable, par exemple l'absence de services de garde d'enfants.

La Loi oblige cependant le bénéficiaire à faire des démarches pour s'intégrer au marché du travail et son refus de le faire ou le refus d'un emploi qui lui est offert, peut entraîner une pénalité.

Tout indique que cette obligation d'entreprendre une démarche active d'intégration sociale ou professionnelle sera maintenue avec le programme Parcours. La personne devra, avec l'aide des services offerts par le Centre local d'emploi, établir un parcours individualisé. Ce parcours individualisé sera mis en vigueur graduellement, selon la possibilité d'offrir des occasions réelles d'insertion dans le cadre du plan d'action local. Dès l'adoption du nouveau régime, les personnes de 18 à 24 ans auront à s'engager dans un tel parcours. Par la suite, le parcours sera offert en priorité aux chefs de famille monoparentale et sur une base volontaire, aux autres prestataires. Cette offre sera progressive et coordonnée avec l'extension des services de garde prévue dans le cadre de la politique familiale.

Orientation et suivi des participants

La démarche d'intégration à l'emploi implique le cheminement du prestataire dans des activités qui favorisent son autonomie financière et l'accès à un emploi, et qui sont appropriées à sa situation et à ses besoins.

Les séances d'orientation se font au Centre Travail-Québec (CTQ). La première entrevue avec l'agent d'employabilité dure en moyenne une heure et se fait dans les premiers dix jours suivant la première prise de contact. Les autres entrevues seront d'une demi-heure environ. La mesure Options offre aux jeunes deux à trois entrevues d'une heure dans les premiers dix jours après la première prise de contact, entrevues qui ont pour effet de mobiliser les jeunes. La personne est vue d'abord individuellement, et participe par la suite à des sessions spécialisées en groupe.

Les agents socio-économiques du Centre offrent aux participants un suivi personnalisé, et ce pendant toute la durée de la participation au programme. Ce suivi vise à permettre au prestataire de fournir des informations utiles sur sa situation face à l'emploi et d'y réfléchir; à déterminer les forces, intérêts et contraintes du prestataire face au marché du travail; à assurer le suivi des démarches d'emploi réalisées en identifiant les difficultés rencontrées; à évaluer si le prestataire est prêt à l'emploi ou s'il a besoin d'une évaluation plus approfondie ou d'une activité plus spécialisée pour cheminer vers son intégration à l'emploi; à transmettre au prestataire des instructions pertinentes quant aux démarches appropriées à sa situation pour réaliser son intégration à l'emploi.

Des mesures sont aussi mises en place pour s'assurer de la participation du prestataire à une activité et ces mesures varient en fonction de la nature de l'activité. Par exemple, l'établissement d'enseignement auquel est inscrit le prestataire transmet au CTQ un rapport mensuel d'absences ou encore avec la mesure Extra, les absences non autorisées d'un prestataire peuvent entraîner son inadmissibilité à la mesure.

La fréquence et l'intensité du suivi peuvent cependant varier en fonction de la disponibilité de l'agente et le manque de disponibilité représente une contrainte dans la situation actuelle. Avec Parcours, on envisage un encadrement plus serré et l'on prévoit embaucher du personnel à cet effet.

Processus d'appel

Le prestataire qui souhaite qu'une décision soit ré-évaluée peut avoir accès à un processus d'appel, ou ce qu'on appelle plus communément, le processus de révision. Le guide explicatif des programmes de la sécurité du revenu, *Une aide à vos efforts!* qui est remis aux prestataires, traite de la question du droit d'appel d'une décision.

Toute décision relative à l'aide accordée dans les programmes Soutien financier ou APTE est sujette à révision sauf les décisions relatives :

- à l'élaboration d'un plan d'action, y compris les services d'information et d'orientation qui sont offerts, et au remboursement des coûts occasionnés par les démarches prévues;
- à la référence à une mesure temporaire de soutien à l'emploi, de formation ou d'activité de services communautaires;
- à la conclusion d'une entente avec le prestataire participant à une mesure ainsi qu'avec son employeur;
- à l'attribution de l'aide dans une situation de risque pour la santé ou risque de dénuement total, en vertu d'un pouvoir discrétionnaire du Ministre et s'il a lieu la réclamation de l'aide versée en vertu de cet article;
- au versement d'une prestation spéciale de santé non prévue au règlement Le chèque mensuel, au même titre qu'un avis écrit transmis au prestataire est considéré comme une décision.

Une demande de révision peut être initiée par le prestataire dans les situations suivantes :

- l'obligation de participer au programme;
- les critères d'admissibilité non remplis;
- le refus d'admission au programme;
- le renvoi du programme;
- la perte de services ou de subventions;

La demande de révision doit être initiée dans les 90 jours de la date à laquelle la personne a été avisée d'une décision, soit à partir de la date de l'avis de décision ou à partir de la date du chèque, selon la première de ces dates, et elle peut être reçue même après l'expiration du délai de 90 jours, si le plaignant fait la preuve qu'il était dans l'impossibilité d'agir plus tôt. Elle ne suspend pas l'exécution de la décision et doit être faite par écrit.

La demande est entendue par la personne désignée par le Ministre dans chacune des régions ou, par un comité formé d'un médecin et d'au moins deux autres professionnels désignés par le Ministre dans le cas d'une évaluation des contraintes que présente une personne à l'emploi, ou par un médecin désigné par le Ministre dans le cas d'une évaluation d'un empêchement que présente une personne à participer à une mesure pour un motif relié à son état de santé.

Une personne peut faire appel devant la Commission des affaires sociales de la décision lui refusant de se pourvoir en révision après l'expiration du délai de 90 jours, dans les 15 jours de la date à laquelle elle a été avisée de ce refus. Si la Commission reçoit l'appel, le dossier retourne à la personne ou au comité qui avait rendu la première décision afin de statuer sur le fond de litige. La Commission des affaires sociales est un tribunal administratif indépendant du ministère.

Ressources communautaires

La base de l'emploi

Facteurs pris en compte lors de l'élaboration des programmes

La réforme de 1989 de même que la nouvelle réforme de 1997 touchent l'ensemble de la province et les programmes conçus et mis en place dans le cadre de ces réformes tiennent compte de la réalité économique provinciale. On considère entre autres :

- les activités économiques prédominantes;
- les tendances dans les activités économiques;
- les tendances de l'emploi;
- le taux de chômage;
- le nombre de personnes qui ont recours à la sécurité du revenu.

Les particularités régionales, notamment la situation de l'emploi au plan local, constituent un élément important. On s'assure que les besoins locaux en compétences correspondent aux compétences que les participants ont déjà acquises ou qu'ils développeraient au cours du programme. On tient compte des besoins futurs en emploi dans chacune des régions, du taux de chômage en fonction des régions, des récessions et de ses conséquences sur l'emploi régional, des mises à pied ou fermetures d'usine et enfin du taux régional d'assistés sociaux.

La nouvelle réforme mettra cependant davantage l'accent sur la prise en charge des services au palier local. Les régions élaboreront leurs plans en fonction de leurs besoins particuliers. La gestion par fonds permettra une plus grande flexibilité.

Équité en matière d'emploi et effet de substitution

Effet de substitution On tente d'éviter que les participants à une mesure du ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité ne remplacent les travailleurs qui ont déjà un emploi dans l'économie locale. Les critères d'admissibilité pour SMT, EXTRA et PAIE visent à prévenir ce genre de situation.

Dans le secteur à but non lucratif il n'y a pas d'effet de substitution car il n'y aurait pas eu d'emploi autrement. Dans le secteur privé, le contrat avec l'employeur énonce clairement que l'employeur n'a pas le droit de combler par un employé subventionné par le ministère, un poste devenu vacant suite à un départ, un congédiement ou une mise à pied.

Prédominance des hommes/femmes dans certains types d'emploi On n'a pas tenu compte, lors de la conception du programme, du fait que les femmes et les hommes ont tendance à prédominer dans des types d'emploi différents. On a cependant ciblé les familles monoparentales dans APTE et PARCOURS. Le programme APPORT, l'allocation intégrée pour enfants et le retour aux études offrent un support aux femmes et on encourage la promotion d'emplois bien rémunérés pour les femmes avec la mesure REPS.

Les services communautaires

Intégration des ressources communautaires

L'intégration des Centres Travail-Québec, de l'Assurance-emploi, et de la Société québécoise de main-d'oeuvre ainsi que le regroupement des programmes et les mesures d'appoint AGIR et OPTIONS pour les jeunes, sont au nombre des mesures qui ont été prises pour réduire au minimum la duplication des services.

L'action du ministère reposera largement sur le partenariat entre l'État et les organismes patronaux, syndicaux et communautaires :

- au niveau national, la nouvelle Commission des partenaires du marché du travail sera associée à la définition des politiques et des stratégies du marché du travail, ainsi qu'à la définition des besoins en développement de la main-d'oeuvre. Les partenaires prendront aussi part à la gestion d'Emploi-Québec, en suivant de façon continue l'évaluation du plan d'action et l'atteinte des objectifs.
- au niveau régional, ce sont les conseils régionaux de la main d'oeuvre qui assumeront le mandat de définir la problématique régionale du marché du travail et d'identifier des stratégies régionales d'action.
- au niveau local, Emploi-Québec, qui sera responsable de la Politique active du travail, collaborera étroitement avec le conseil d'administration du centre local de développement. À ce palier, tout près du marché du travail, s'ancrera l'action d'Emploi Québec et de ses partenaires. En effet, les conseils d'administration des centres locaux de développement auront la responsabilité d'élaborer un plan local de développement de l'économie et de l'emploi qui comprendra la stratégie retenue au palier local pour le développement de la main-d'oeuvre.

Un guichet unique

Au niveau local, la livraison des services de première ligne relèvera du Centre local d'emploi (CLE), qui regroupera aussi les services de sécurité du revenu. Les centres locaux d'emploi, qui seront au nombre de 130 à l'échelle du Québec, répondront aux besoins de tous et toutes, en emploi ou en recherche d'emploi - prestataires ou non de l'Assurance-emploi ou de la sécurité du revenu - et aux entreprises qui ont besoin de main-d'oeuvre.

Prise en considération de la diversité dans la communauté

Les facteurs démographiques des prestataires de la sécurité du revenu dans la province sont des éléments que l'on prend en considération lors de la conception des programmes. Ces facteurs incluent l'âge, le sexe, la constellation familiale, la taille de la famille, le milieu rural/urbain, l'origine ethnoculturelle, le statut d'handicapé.

- *Les jeunes* On a déjà parlé des mesures qui visent plus particulièrement les jeunes et de la volonté d'intensifier les interventions auprès de ce groupe d'âge. Il s'agit du premier groupe ciblé par PARCOURS et les jeunes feront l'objet d'un suivi systématique.

  Les programmes qui s'adressent aux jeunes n'offrent pas actuellement toute la flexibilité requise pour répondre à leurs besoins. Les normes établies par le ministère de la Sécurité du revenu et du ministère de l'Éducation représentent parfois des embûches. Il faut intensifier la collaboration entre les ministères et la nouvelle réforme semble offrir les moyens de le faire. Une plus grande décentralisation, la gestion par fonds en fonction des besoins locaux, et les plans locaux d'action concertés pour le développement de l'économie et l'emploi donneront la flexibilité nécessaire.

- *Les personnes d'origine ethnique différente* Pour répondre aux besoins de ce groupe, on établit des liens avec le Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et Immigration (MRCI) et avec les Centres d'orientation et de formation des immigrants (COFI) pour l'alphabétisation. On poursuit aussi les efforts pour assurer la reconnaissance des diplômes tout en favorisant le développement des liens avec les corporations professionnelles.

- *Les femmes* Les familles monoparentales sont une priorité et une série de mesures visent à appuyer les femmes. On a déjà parlé des subventions pour les services de garde, l'exemption pour les mères d'enfants de moins de 6 ans. SEMO vise plus particulièrement les femmes en difficulté et plusieurs mesures FRAIE (Fonds régionalisé d'aide à l'intégration à l'emploi) s'adressent aux très jeunes parents.

- *Les Autochtones* Il y relativement peu d'Autochtones hors réserves qui sont bénéficiaires de la sécurité du revenu. Ils ont accès aux mêmes mesures que les autres groupes. Les Autochtones qui vivent sur les réserves sont sous la responsabilité du Fédéral et gèrent leurs propres programmes. Quelques-uns de ces programmes s'inspirent des programmes de la sécurité du revenu. C'est le cas de la mesure Rattrapage Scolaire.

- *Les personnes handicapées* 30% des personnes qui participent aux services externes de main-d'oeuvre (EXTRA) sont des personnes handicapées.

La flexibilité des programmes

En 1989, la flexibilité accordée dans le cadre des programmes reposait en grande partie sur le processus d'évaluation des besoins et le développement d'un plan d'action avec le prestataire, de même qu'avec la diversité et la multiplicité des mesures. Avec la réforme de 1997, on mise sur le développement d'un plan local d'action adapté aux réalités locales, la définition des parcours individualisés vers l'insertion, la formation et l'emploi, des mesures de formation diversifiées, des services psychosociaux pour les cas difficiles, des services de garde, des actions spécifiques en faveur de l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes, une intensification du soutien aux mères de familles monoparentales dans leur parcours vers l'insertion, la formation et l'emploi, et enfin, pour les immigrants reçus, l'adaptation des services et le soutien à l'intégration socio-économique.

Évaluation du programme

Le plan d'évaluation

L'évaluation de la mesure peut se faire à la fin du processus ou à différentes étapes du programme, comme ce fut le cas avec Relance. Le budget réservé à l'évaluation du programme en 96-97 était de 1,4 million. Le ministère fait lui-même l'évaluation, la recherche et produit les statistiques. Dans certains cas, le Fédéral paie la moitié des coûts d'évaluation.

Le programme mis sur pied en 1989 prévoyait au départ un cadre d'évaluation globale, qui visait particulièrement l'évaluation de l'implantation du nouveau programme. On a par la suite procédé, dans le cadre des plans annuels, à l'évaluation des mesures et le rapport Relance est le résultat de la démarche d'évaluation des cinq mesures. Cette évaluation a été répétée à trois reprises, mais comme les résultats allaient toujours dans le même sens, on a alors mis fin à ces évaluations.

Les études d'évaluation réalisées par la Direction de l'évaluation et de la statistique du ministère de la Sécurité du revenu avaient pour but de dresser un bilan des connaissances acquises en matière de développement de l'employabilité des prestataires de la sécurité du revenu. On a tenté de répondre aux questions suivantes :

- Que savons nous des effets de ces interventions pour l'intégration en emploi des prestataires?
- A-t-on réussi véritablement à rendre les personnes qui y ont participé plus aptes à occuper un emploi?
- Sont elles significativement plus nombreuses à participer au marché du travail?
- Quelles sont les perceptions des différentes personnes impliquées, prestataires, agents, employeurs privés et organismes, à l'égard de ces programmes? Pourquoi y participe-t-on? Pourquoi met-on fin prématurément à une participation?

Le programme Parcours prévoit un cadre d'évaluation systématique et intégré. On touche ici deux réformes : celle de la sécurité du revenu et le volet emploi. Le ministère a toujours accordé une importance égale aux deux volets de la recherche, soit l'aspect quantitatif et l'aspect qualitatif. La SQDM (volet emploi), a historiquement favorisé l'approche quantitative. Il est encore trop tôt pour dire quelle orientation sera privilégiée en matière d'évaluation suite à l'intégration des programmes de la sécurité du revenu et de l'emploi dans les prochains mois.

Évaluation coûts-bénéfices

On considère qu'il y a des avantages à la fois monétaires et non monétaires au développement et à la mise sur pied des programmes d'employabilité. Du côté des avantages monétaires on retrouve les données fiscales, les prestations, les taxes à la consommation et enfin les économies. Les avantages non-monétaires incluent la valeur sociale de la production: un service offert à une personne âgée, la baisse de la criminalité ou encore des coûts sociaux engendrés par la dépendance à la sécurité du revenu.

Recueil de statistiques

Le recueil de différentes statistiques permet également d'obtenir les données suivantes:

- le nombre total de participants qui quittent l'assistance sociale;
- le nombre total de participants qui trouvent un emploi;
- la proportion de participants qui quittent l'assistance sociale;
- la proportion de participants qui trouvent un emploi;
- la mesure dans laquelle les participants conservent leur emploi. (On définit ici la notion de durabilité à 18 mois);
- le temps requis pour trouver un emploi; donnée recueillie d'une façon ponctuelle, comme dans le cas de Relance;
- la mesure dans laquelle les participants qui ont quitté la Sécurité du Revenu pour intégrer le marché du travail, reviennent à la Sécurité du Revenu;
- la mesure dans laquelle les parents adolescents complètent leurs études secondaires et trouvent un emploi;
- la nature des emplois obtenus par les participants selon les catégories d'emploi (temps plein, temps partiel, court terme, etc.), ainsi que le niveau d'emploi obtenu (débutant, échelle salariale, niveau de compétences) et le type de profession exercé par les participants sont des données que l'on obtient de façon ponctuelle.

Les gains d'emploi ou revenus d'emploi ne sont pas des données que l'on recueille de façon récurrente en raison des problèmes de standardisation. Il est difficile de cerner les revenus lorsque les gens occupent deux emplois ou encore travaillent sur appel. On souhaiterait le faire à l'avenir, et de façon plus régulière, mais on doit être en mesure de contrôler les problèmes méthodologiques.

L'évaluation des participants

La satisfaction du client sera évaluée par rapport à la prestation de services. On prend un ensemble d'éléments et on mesure la satisfaction en fonction de chacun des éléments.

Utilisation des résultats de l'évaluation

Les résultats de l'évaluation peuvent servir à élargir le programme, à entreprendre de nouveaux programmes, à modifier le programme ou encore à y mettre fin. Les résultats d'évaluation des différentes mesures seront considérés dans la planification des nouveaux programmes associés avec Parcours.

Autres considérations

La synthèse des résultats des études d'évaluation permet de constater qu'en général, la participation aux mesures permet d'atteindre l'objectif d'intégration en emploi. On observe un effet positif à trois niveaux : l'insertion en emploi, la sortie de la sécurité du revenu à la suite de l'obtention d'un emploi et la qualité de l'intégration en emploi. La situation des personnes participantes est plus avantageuse par rapport à chacun de ces éléments que celle observée chez des personnes non participantes. Par conséquent, il y a un impact ou un effet net positif relié à la seule participation aux mesures.

On est par contre sensible à l'effet d'attraction. On sait qu'un séjour de deux ans à l'Aide sociale permettra d'avoir accès à la formation professionnelle au secondaire alors que le parcours normal devrait être celui des Prêts et Bourses. On est conscient par ailleurs que les personnes aux prises avec plus de barrières à l'emploi profitent davantage des programmes d'employabilité et celles ayant un bon potentiel d'employabilité risquent de retarder leur sortie de l'aide en raison de leur participation à une mesure. C'est d'ailleurs ce que nous révèle le résultat de deux études, la première réalisée en 1988 et la seconde en 1993.

Et il faut bien le dire, pour bon nombre de prestataires qui entreprennent une participation, l'objectif d'intégration en emploi n'est pas atteint. Une étude qualitative réalisée en 1993 parle des conséquences au plan psychologique d'une telle situation. Ainsi, le processus peut mener à renforcer un sentiment de dévalorisation qui, par la suite, rendra encore plus difficiles les démarches pour réintégrer le marché du travail.

D'autres difficultés peuvent survenir, notamment une mauvaise évaluation des besoins conjuguée à l'absence d'outils adaptés et le manque d'information des prestataires. Le processus lui-même laisse peu de place au prestataire concerné dans le choix de la mesure et le soutien pour la recherche d'emploi est souvent insuffisant. Les prestataires sont nombreux à vivre des problèmes personnels, familiaux ou de santé à un moment ou l'autre de leur séjour à l'aide; ce type de contraintes bien proportionnellement moins nombreuses parmi les participants que chez les personnes non participantes, est quand même présent. On note par ailleurs un manque de services complémentaires aux mesures, et le lien entre les services offerts et les besoins de la clientèle n'est pas toujours celui qu'on aurait souhaité.

Les développements récents du printemps 1997 au printemps 1998

En avril 1997, les gouvernements du Québec et du Canada signaient une entente de principe relative au marché du travail. En novembre 1997, un second accord était conclu afin de définir les modalités de mise en oeuvre et d'implantation de l'entente de principe.

En vertu de ces ententes, le Québec a maintenant la responsabilité d'offrir des services d'information sur le marché du travail, de «counselling d'emploi», et de placement. Il doit également concevoir, mettre en oeuvre et évaluer les mesures actives d'emploi sur son territoire. Le transfert au Québec de l'ensemble de ces responsabilités se fera à partir du 1er avril 1998.

À partir de cette date, les mesures actives d'emploi en vigueur au Québec seront réformées en respectant une volonté d'harmonisation, de décloisonnement et de simplification des services. Ces mesures, qui étaient au nombre d'une cinquantaine pour les deux paliers de gouvernement, seront regroupées en dix mesures actives souples et décloisonnées. Les mesures actuelles continueront cependant d'exister pendant un certain temps, pour permettre aux personnes déjà engagées dans des programmes de finaliser leur participation au cours de l'année de transition.

Les nouvelles mesures pourront être offertes à toutes les clientèles, incluant les chômeurs, les assistés sociaux et les autres personnes pouvant requérir des services d'emploi. Elles se situent dans les cinq axes de la Politique active du marché du travail en vigueur au Québec : la préparation, l'insertion, le maintien en emploi, la stabilisation et la création d'emploi.

Il s'agit de mesures transitoires dont certaines pourraient être révisées à nouveau au cours des 12 prochains mois. Elles porteront dans un premier temps les dénominations suivantes :

- Concertation pour l'emploi
- Services d'aide à l'emploi
- Projets de préparation à l'emploi
- Subventions et prêts individuels aux travailleurs et aux travailleuses (SPRINT)
- Achats de formation
- Soutien individuel à la formation
- Projets de formation axés sur l'emploi
- Subventions salariales d'insertion en emploi
- Soutien au travail autonome
- Aide aux parents pour leurs revenus de travail (APPORT)

De plus, des services universels d'information sur le marché du travail et de placement seront disponibles dans tous les centres locaux d'emploi. Finalement, la mesure EXTRA continuera d'être offerte à certaines personnes pour lesquelles l'accès au marché du travail ne peut être envisagé à court terme, afin de favoriser leur insertion sociale et le développement de certaines compétences personnelles préalables à l'insertion en emploi.

Personne-ressource

NOM :	Simon Blouin
TITRE :	Conseiller en politiques d'emploi Direction des politiques du marché du travail et de l'emploi
ADRESSE :	Ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité 425, St-Amable, 4e étage Québec (PQ) G1R 4Z1
TÉLÉPHONE :	(418) 646-2286
ADRESSE ÉLECTRONIQUE :	
TÉLÉCOPIEUR :	(418) 643-0019

Les sources d'information

- Entrevues à Québec avec des personnes-ressources du ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité, les 11 et 12 juin 1997.
- Synthèse des résultats des études d'évaluation en matière de développement de l'employabilité et d'intégration en emploi.
- Rapport statistique :
  - Prestataires de la sécurité du revenu
  - Programmes APTE et Soutien financier
  - Juin 96, décembre 96, janvier 97, février 97.
- Connaissance des mesures de développement de l'employabilité et d'intégration en emploi Programme d'entraînement à la tâche des nouveaux agents d'aide socio-économique.
- Mesures d'appoint
- Mesures de développement de l'employabilité et d'aide à l'emploi.
  - Expérience de travail
  - PAIE
  - RADE
  - OPTIONS
  - AGIR
  - Finding your own job! Job search guide
- Activités fédérales-provinciales de formation et d'intégration en emploi
- La sécurité du revenu, une aide à vos efforts
  - Guide explicatif des programmes de la sécurité du revenu, 1993
- Une aide à vos efforts!
  - Guide explicatif des programmes de la sécurité du revenu, 1996
- Barèmes des programmes APTE et Soutien financier, 1er avril 1997
- Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu : Pour mieux comprendre la sécurité du revenu (Net doc)
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- Workfare in Quebec, Shragge & Deniger
- Apprendre à l'âge adulte - État de situation et nouveaux défis
- Workfare - Does it work? Is it fair? Evans et al.
- Une réforme axée sur la formation, l'insertion et l'emploi
- La Ministre Blackburn amorce une réforme en profondeur du régime de la sécurité du revenu Bouchard et Fortin nommés coprésidents d'un comité d'experts
- La sécurité du revenu : Le baromètre d'une société en changement
- Net Doc - Du neuf, la réforme etc.

- Un PARCOURS vers l'insertion, la formation et l'emploi
  - La synthèse
  - Tenir compte des contraintes temporaires à l'emploi
  - Child Care Plan Makes Quebec Distinct
- Manuel d'interprétation des programmes Volume 1
- Manuel d'interprétation des programmes Volume 2
- Le Canada et le Québec signent une entente historique relative au marché du travail
- Le gouvernement du Québec crée le Ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité
- Le ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité: Proposition d'organisation administrative
- Aide aux parents pour leurs revenus de travail, 1997
- Faites faire un bond à vos revenus - APPORT
- Développement de l'employabilité et intégration en emploi : Proposition préliminaire de répartition de crédits, 96-97
- Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu - Rapport annuel, 95-96
- Organigramme du ministère de la Sécurité du revenu

Liste des acronymes

APTE	Actions positives pour le travail et l'emploi
APPORT	Aide aux parents pour leurs revenus de travail
AGIR	Activité pour l'intégration par la recherche d'emploi (pour prestataires non participants). Aide personnalisée et aide financière supplémentaire.
CLE	Centre local d'emploi
COFI	Centres d'orientation et de formation pour les immigrants
CTQ	Centre Travail-Québec
DE-IE	Développement de l'employabilité et intégration à l'emploi
DEP	Diplôme d'études professionnelles
EXTRA	Expérience de travail
FRAIE	Fonds régionalisé d'aide à l'intégration en emploi
MRCI	Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et Immigration
MSR	Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu, remplacé en mai 1997 par le Ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité
OPTIONS	Démarche pour évaluer les raisons de la demande d'aide financière et élaborer un plan d'action (entreprendre ou compléter une formation professionnelle ou postsecondaire, ou bien participer à des activités d'aide à la recherche d'emploi).
PAIE	Programme d'aide à l'intégration en emploi
PARCOURS	Livre vert déposé le 10 décembre 1996, *Un parcours vers l'insertion, la formation et l'emploi*, qui donne les orientations de la nouvelle réforme de la ministre Blackburn.
RADE	Reconnaissance des activités de développement de l'employabilité
REPS	Retour aux études postsecondaires pour les chefs de famille monoparentale
RS	Rattrapage scolaire
SEA	Soutien à l'emploi autonome
SEMO	Services externes de main d'oeuvre
SMT	Stages en milieu de travail
SPRINT	Subventions et prêts individuels aux travailleurs et aux travailleuses
SQDM	Société québécoise de développement de la main d'oeuvre
TC	Travaux communautaires

ONTARIO

Summary

Ontario Works is a program of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. "The shortest route to paid employment" is the driving principle of all program activities; all activities included in business plans must be aimed toward this objective. The program began in June 1996.

Employment support services assist participants in becoming job-ready; they are designed to support the shortest route to paid employment through structured job-search activities, basic education and skill upgrading and the acquisition of additional experience and job-specific skills. Employment placement and support to self-employment services are intended for participants who are ready to find and maintain employment or who are interested in self-employment. Community participation services are designed to enable social assistance recipients to contribute to their community, build networks, gain experience and gain employment-related skills.

No education or training program has been developed specifically for Ontario Works. Service delivery agents (municipalities) refer participants to basic education opportunities where appropriate and to available job-specific skills training to assist recipients in becoming job-ready. Referral to training normally follows four months of initial active job search.

All employable people applying for or receiving social assistance are required to participate in Ontario Works and are expected to go through the different programs and services within set timeframes. A person found to be in noncompliance with the requirements of the Ontario Works program may have their application for financial assistance refused or may have their assistance cancelled or reduced. Voluntary participants are not subject to benefit cancellation or reduction. All applicants and recipients have the right to appeal any decision to refuse, cancel or reduce assistance.

People with disabilities, people aged 65 and over and sole-support parents are not required to participate. Sole-support parents with older children will be required to participate at a later date; currently, they have requirements for job searching and acceptance if they do not have child-care requirements. Temporary deferral from active participation may be allowed because of temporary illness, absence of child care, court appearance or incarceration or failure of transportation with no alternative arrangements.

Ontario Works has been designed to be delivered locally to allow for creativity and flexibility at the local level; nonetheless, the province is prescriptive in its funding and program standards. While specific groups have not been targeted by the program, business plans should describe how recipients will be given priority for the different activities within Ontario Works. The plans are to describe the route for job-ready recipients, long-term recipients with inexperience and poor work skills and participants with other significant challenges such as substance abuse. Job placement agencies receive higher fees for placing participants with families than for placing singles. Community placements must not displace paid employment.

Ontario shares the costs of administration 50-50 and the costs of employment measures and financial assistance 80-20 with municipalities. The total amount of funds allocated for the program in 1996–97 was $120 million; $450 million has been allocated in total for 1997–2000. As of October 1996, the provincial caseload of welfare recipients was 264,000. Municipalities are expected to provide group orientations on available supports and the local labour market. They are also expected to monitor the eligibility, participation and interest of recipients and to monitor the contract compliance of participating organizations under contract. Municipalities are required to report on part-time and full-time employment outcomes and reduced welfare spending as a result of earnings. Lessons learned will be used to modify the program over time.

A number of changes have occurred since the information outlined in this inventory was collected. In June 1997, introduction of the Social Assistance Reform Act fulfilled the government's public commitments for welfare reform through two included statutes: the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act. The Ontario Works Act, which replaced the General Welfare Assistance Act, introduced further changes to the welfare system that became effective as of January 1998 and other changes effective April 1998. The Ontario Disability Support Program Act was proclaimed, effective June 1, 1998, replacing the Family Benefits Act.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Program

Ontario Works

Description

Ontario Works is a program of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The program has two components:

- employment assistance, which includes employment support, community participation and employment placement
- financial assistance

The Ministry of Community and Social Services requires municipalities delivering Ontario Works to submit service targets for each of these components on an annual basis.

All people applying for or receiving social assistance under the General Welfare Assistance (GWA) Act who are employable according to the Act and Regulations are required to participate in Ontario Works. If a person is employable, he or she is identified as a participant.

People with disabilities, people aged 65 and over and sole-support parents are not required to participate. Sole-support parents with older children will be required to participate at a later date; currently, they have requirements for job searching and acceptance if they do not have child-care requirements.

Goals

Ontario Works has the following goals:

- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment
- develop the short-term work skills of program participants
- make employment more attractive financially than social assistance
- reduce the rate at which people return to social assistance and increase the rate at which they return to employment
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance

Program Rationale

Ontario Works is part of the political and fiscal platform of Ontario's Progressive Conservative government. It is a major component of the "common sense revolution" of that government. Several essential elements of that platform are reflected in Ontario Works:

- Passive programming will change to active programming.
- Social assistance programming will have more of an employability focus, with an emphasis on exiting social assistance.
- Key to exiting social assistance is the philosophy that any job is a good job. The objective is the shortest route to paid employment.
- People work for their welfare cheque through the community participation component of the program.
- Exiting the system is the participant's main responsibility; all program components contribute to this aim.
- Participants have the opportunity to give back to the community through the community participation component.

Ontario Works was implemented after the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). The introduction of the CHST affected the design and implementation of the program especially in terms of the benefit structure of Ontario Works. There have been two recent cuts in benefits.

Program Activities

Main Activity

"The shortest route to paid employment" is the driving principle of all program activities; all activities included in business plans must be aimed toward this objective. The kinds of activities that each participant undertakes are based on two factors:

- what the participant needs to get back to work quickly
- the kinds of community placements, employment supports (including basic education and skill training) and employment placement activities available in the community

Specific Activities

The following employment measures are covered by the program:

- adult basic education/literacy training. Participants can be referred to the Ministry of Education and Training (MET).
- second language training. Participants can be referred to the MET.
- substance abuse recovery programs. Participants can be referred to these programs as a first step, where necessary, to support participation.
- high-school completion
- job-readiness training
  - job-search training

  - career planning
  - job referrals
- placement in paid employment. Participants can build on volunteer work done as part of a community placement and job-search skills developed through employment support.
- supports to self-employment. Support is available to unsubsidized participants who have been assessed as having a viable business idea that could be supported through self-employment development.

Employment assistance measures include employment support, employment placement, support to self-employment and community participation.

- ***Employment support*** Employment support services assist participants in becoming job-ready. They are designed to support the shortest route to paid employment through structured job-search activities, basic education and skill upgrading and the acquisition of additional experience and job-specific skills. Ultimately, the objective is to reduce social assistance expenditures.

- ***Employment placement and support to self-employment*** This component of the program is intended for participants who are ready to find and maintain employment. It also assists participants interested in self-employment to develop business enterprises. Compensation is paid to agencies on a performance basis using a share of the funds that would otherwise be paid out in social assistance to the participant. The purposes of employment placement services are to
  - place participants into unsubsidized, competitive employment as quickly as possible
  - support participants interested in self-employment
  - reduce social assistance expenditures to generate savings that can be reinvested
  - enable service delivery agents (municipalities, regional governments, districts) to implement and manage innovative and effective strategies for getting participants into paid employment

- ***Community participation*** The purpose of this component of the program is to enable participants to contribute to their community while receiving social assistance and to enable them to build some basic networks, valuable experience and employment-related skills to help them move into the paid labour force. Placements should enhance participants' self-esteem and foster independence and self-reliance in the process of involving them in their communities. Placements also provide an opportunity for local communities to identify projects that will enhance the local quality of life. Thus, community placements are of value to both the participant and the community. Placements in the private sector are not allowed. Recipients may spend a maximum of 70 hours per month in community participation activities.

When a person applies for general assistance, the service delivery agent first determines whether the applicant meets the needs-based test for social assistance under the GWA Act. If the applicant is not eligible for assistance, there is no requirement for Ontario Works. If the applicant meets the needs test, the service delivery agent then determines whether he or she is employable according to the GWA Act and Regulations. Every employable recipient is identified as a participant in Ontario Works.

The service delivery agent then determines whether any grounds for temporary deferral of active participation exist and whether any requirements or restrictions apply that affect the type of referral or placement that can be made. The agent next determines whether participants who are not temporarily deferred are able to pursue a job search (either independently or through a structured job search program) or whether they are in need of basic education.

To be considered for a referral to a job placement agency or for self-employment development, participants must have

- been on social assistance for four months or more
- undertaken at least four months of job searching
- not been placed by a job placement agency within the previous 18 months

At or soon after the time of application, the participant and service delivery agent develop and agree on a plan of one or more specific activities, including employment support, employment placement and community participation, from the range of approved activities available. The resulting participation agreement is tailored for each individual and can be amended if circumstances change. It is a living document and evolves as participants are provided with access to opportunities and complete them. It also responds flexibly to temporary or changed circumstances in a participant's life such as illness, injury, lack of child care or lack of attendant care for dependent family members.

Training and Educational Activities

No education or training program has been developed specifically for Ontario Works. Service delivery agents refer participants to basic education opportunities where appropriate and to available skills training to assist recipients in becoming job-ready and to support their shortest route to paid employment. Training is job-specific, providing a quick connection with or return to employment. Training for training's sake is not approved. GWA recipients who are employable adults in intact families and sole-support parents who wish to attend full-time post-secondary education are expected to seek student loans from the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Referral to job-specific training normally follows four months of initial active job search.

Education is available for people who lack the basic language, literacy, numeracy and work skills required for most jobs. For some participants, the time required for basic education may be lengthy but is still considered the shortest route given their skills and circumstances. There are a number of considerations in determining whether a referral for basic education will achieve the shortest route back to employment for any recipient, for example,

- local labour market conditions. What are the hiring criteria of local industries and companies where opportunities exist?
- experience of recipients in paid employment. Has the recipient been able to gain employment in the past regardless of low academic achievement?
- transferable skills. Does the recipient have skills that could lead to a successful outcome in paid employment or self-employment regardless of low academic achievement and little paid employment experience?

Employment-Based Activities

A community participation placement is any unpaid community service activity sponsored and directed by communities, public organizations or non-profit organizations. It includes self-initiated placements proposed by participants. Community placements and job-search supports may be provided to participants from the time of application to support their success in achieving employment. Community placements range in complexity to match the work experience and needs of different participants.

Private sector organizations are restricted to offering financial or in-kind support such as equipment, materials or expertise to community placements. They may not directly or indirectly offer, administer or supervise community placements.

Under the employment placement component of Ontario Works, private or non-profit organizations that have placed the participant in unsubsidized, paid employment (similar to the service provided by headhunter organizations) are financially compensated for six months. These organizations receive part of the monies that would have been paid to the recipient on financial assistance. Savings are also realized from financial assistance reductions as a result of part-time earnings from more than one job over the contract period.

Participants interested in becoming self-employed are referred to a self-employment development agency in the private or non-profit sector, where appropriate. The program requires

- the development and filing of a business plan within eight weeks of registration
- obtaining a first sale within 16 weeks of registration
- remaining in full compliance with income reporting and other GWA Act or Family Benefits Act (FBA) requirements

Participants in self-employment development are eligible for a business asset exemption of $10,000 or more (as approved by the service delivery agent) as required for development of the business. Money borrowed for the business may be exempted as income. Recipients are registered with a self-employment development agency for a maximum of 60 weeks. If necessary and if justified by the progress of the business, the registration may be extended for up to 12 additional weeks.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

The province, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, was responsible for designing Ontario Works. Although the program was politically driven, a ministerial forum was part of the planning and development process. No stakeholders were consulted.

Work-to-welfare programs in Quebec, New Zealand, Michigan, Wisconsin and California were reviewed, but the political agenda was the primary force in the genesis of Ontario Works.

Responsibility for Implementation

Municipalities (service delivery agencies) are responsible for the implementation and administration of Ontario Works, including the delivery of financial assistance. Specific details of who does what are spelled out in the business plans of the service delivery agents.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

During the transitional phase of Ontario Works, the province encourages municipalities to exercise local flexibility in delivery approaches, provided that plans

- adhere to new regulations in the GWA Act
- adhere to provincial standards and guidelines for Ontario Works
- reflect a willingness and ability to serve recipients, as demonstrated by participation targets and a plan to promote access for FBA recipients
- contain accountability guidelines, including information-reporting requirements

Business plans determine how a municipality implements and administers Ontario Works; as local communities develop unique and successful approaches to the delivery of Ontario Works, program guidelines will be modified. Although Ontario Works has been designed to be delivered locally to allow for creativity and flexibility at the local level, the province is prescriptive in its funding and program standards.

Duration of the Program

The first phase of Ontario Works began in June 1996 with the identification of 20 initiating sites across Ontario. Approval of program service delivery agents began with communities that had demonstrated readiness through positive local leadership from the public, non-profit and private sectors and that had a local infrastructure to support the range of activities offered. By September 1996, participation in activities defined as components of Ontario Works became a condition of eligibility for social assistance for all applicants and recipients who are employable and not exempt by program criteria. However, active participation was deferred until there was an approved program agent in the area. By January 1997, 17 of the 20 initiating sites had had their business plans approved. All municipalities are required to implement business plans by January 1998. (As of January 1998, 63 of 65 municipalities had had their plan approved.) First Nations communities are also required to deliver the program.

While participants do not have to complete the program within a certain period of time, the principle of "the shortest route to paid employment" governs all program components and activities.

For community participation placements, service delivery agents must ensure that these placements meet the following criteria:

- Participants do not spend more than 6 months at any single placement except where a specific plan of skill training is in place, in which case a participant may spend up to 11 months in the placement.
- Participants may spend up to but not more than 70 hours a month in community participation (cumulative of all time spent at all approved placements). The maximum amount of hours any recipient is required to spend is no more than the individual benefit level divided by the minimum wage plus vacation pay or, in the case of a benefit unit of more than one adult, the maximum is no more than the benefit level divided by the number of adults and then divided by the minimum wage plus vacation pay.
- There is no minimum number of hours a month that a participant must spend at a community placement.
- Students registered in approved full-time basic education or job-specific skills training may be required to accept an offer of community placement of up to 70 hours a month during summer vacation.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

The following types and amounts of financial assistance are provided under the program:

- training allowances (through MET)
- compensation for job-related expenses. Employment-related expenses are available to support participation in the employment support and employment placement components of Ontario Works. Allowable out-of-pocket expenses that will be covered include necessary transportation, clothing, grooming, supplies and equipment, telephone calls, minor fees such as certificate changes, short training costs and

emergency or infrequent babysitting and child care. Expense ceilings of $250 per month per recipient, with a maximum advance of $500, now apply to the employment-related and community participation expenses of a recipient. Community participation expenses are also available to cover, where required as a condition of referral or placement, criminal reference checks and medical examinations and certificates.

- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction
- removal of the limit on the number of hours that recipients are allowed to engage in paid work
- compensation for child-care expenses
- child-care subsidies
- transportation subsidies. Actual costs of transportation, within the ceiling amount of $250 per month, are paid.
- housing subsidies (rent and repairs)
- moving expenses
- assistance for people with disabilities. Supports to people with disabilities are available for the purchase of technical aids or devices. The needs of people who require more extensive supports are met through the Ministry's Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- supplemental health care
- dental care
- health and safety protection. Participants are covered by Workers' Compensation or the Ministry's insurance plan.

Financial Incentives for Employers

No financial incentives are offered to employers. Agencies that help participants to find work under the employment placement component are remunerated.

Program Funding

Funding of Ontario Works is provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the service delivery agents (municipalities) throughout Ontario. These agents are being consolidated to an overall number of 50.

Ontario shares the costs of administration 50-50 and the costs of employment measures and financial assistance 80-20 with municipalities. The province is introducing a more businesslike approach to the funding of services by paying based on agreed-upon results – i.e., the province will pay for the delivery of Ontario Works components based on

- provincially accepted municipal targets for the number of community participation placements and the number of hours undertaken by Ontario Works participants
- provincially accepted municipal targets for the number of people who will receive employment support as part of an independent job search, a structured job search or a referral to basic education or job-related skills training
- reductions in spending in the employment placement component

After a municipality's business plan is approved, a service contract that includes the municipality's service targets is negotiated. The Ministry's area offices monitor performance against the agreed targets identified in the contract. Municipalities that do not meet their targets have their funding adjusted to actual achieved units of service.

The total amount of funds allocated for the program in 1996–97 was $120 million; $450 million has been allocated in total for 1997–2000. It is too early to determine whether there will be increases or decreases in staff at the provincial or municipal levels as a result of Ontario Works.

Multi-year allocations to Ministry area offices are based on caseload distribution and provide a framework for multi-year planning. Separate allocations are provided for each of the three components: community participation, employment support and employment placement. There is an additional allocation for child care under Ontario Works. Municipalities have the opportunity for in-year and year-to-year review of targets and adjusted funding to address unanticipated delivery factors and the achievement of units above anticipated levels.

Subsidized Child Care

Child care subsidies are available to program participants. Municipalities can provide fee assistance toward child-care support for parents participating in community placement, employment support and employment placement.

Participants can be reimbursed for the cost of licensed child care or the actual cost of informal child care up to the ceiling under the Supports to Employment Program (STEP) – up to $390 – for children up to 12 years of age. Child care costs can also be reimbursed for children aged 13 and over who have special needs. The province shares the cost of child care with the municipality on an 80-20 basis. Child-care costs have been projected to be equal to 10% of the participant cost for all components. Where a participant receives earnings from employment, the costs of child care for both licensed and informal care may be recovered. Payments for informal child care cannot be made to the parent of the child, the supporting person of the child or a sibling of the child living with the participant who is under the age of 18.

With the change in eligibility criteria for sole-support parents and their participation in Ontario Works, an increase is anticipated in the demand for child care.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

If an applicant meets the needs test for receipt of financial assistance, the service delivery agent determines whether the person is employable. Every employable recipient is identified as a participant in Ontario Works.

Sole-support parents are not required to take part during the implementation phase of the program. As the program expands, sole-support parents, except those with young children for whom publicly funded education is not available, will be expected to participate.

While specific groups have not been targeted by the program, business plans should describe how recipients will be given priority for the different activities within Ontario Works. The plans are to describe the route for job-ready recipients, long-term recipients with inexperience and poor work skills and participants with other significant challenges such as substance abuse.

Caseloads

As of October 1996, the provincial caseload of welfare recipients was 264,000.

The following types of information about participants are gathered:
- demographics
- education and training history
- employment history
- medical-social history
- child care needs and use
- length of time in receipt of financial assistance

Accessibility

While it is too early to determine if the program has been able to serve all people who are required to participate, there is no indication that there are insufficient community placements to meet the need. However, not every opportunity or activity will be available when needed. Business plans should describe strategies for setting capacity limits such that recipients do not have to wait to participant. Each business plan should have a range of opportunities among the program's three components. There is no definitive sequencing of components for participants; for example, a participant can go directly to the employment support component after a self-directed job search. A self-directed or structured job search is always a part of the program.

Business plans must outline the service routes both for job-ready recipients and for those who are not job-ready. Generally, services required by long-term recipients are the more costly services. The availability of these service is, in part, based on affordability as determined by the municipality in the business plan.

Nature of Participation

People applying for or receiving financial assistance and who are employable according to the Act and its Regulations must participate in Ontario Works as a condition of eligibility for financial assistance. Recipients are expected to undertake one or more of a number of activities that together will involve them in full time active preparation and search for employment and community participation.

People with disabilities, seniors aged 65 and over and sole-support parents are not required to participate in Ontario Works but may choose to do so. Sole-support parents with older children will be required to participate at a later date. To encourage voluntary participation, information sessions aimed at participants are available promoting the benefits and positive aspects of Ontario Works. Business plans are required to describe how municipalities will ensure access for voluntary participants in each component, including referrals from the Family Benefits Act, with a target of a minimum of 10% of total participants who are voluntary.

Early implementation includes
- single people
- couples (with or without children)
- dependent adults in a family
- people applying for or receiving financial assistance pending receipt of employment insurance benefits

Temporary deferral from active participation may be determined using these criteria as a guide:
- temporary illness
- absence of child care
- court appearance or incarceration
- failure of transportation with no alternative arrangements

If the recipient does not participate in Ontario Works activities, the service delivery agent may determine that the recipient is in noncompliance and therefore not eligible for financial assistance, unless a reasonable excuse for noncompliance has been accepted. There are four kinds of noncompliance with Ontario Works:

- refusal to accept employment and to make reasonable efforts to seek and maintain employment
- refusal to accept a referral to a placement (employment or community participation) without reasonable cause
- refusal to accept an offer of a placement (job search, employment placement or community participation) without reasonable cause
- failure to make reasonable efforts to meet requirements

A determination of "reasonableness" is made in accordance with current business practices and includes the notion of "best fit" between a participant's interest and skills and available opportunities. Service delivery agents are expected to use the reasonableness tests identified in their approved business plans. Reasonableness may also be determined using these criteria as a guide when assessing opportunities:

- The opportunity is accessible by public transportation at the times the participant is expected to attend, unless other transportation arrangements are available.
- The opportunity is within the limits of a city and its suburbs or neighbouring rural communities or, for larger metropolitan areas, within an hour's travelling time of the participant's residence.
- Child care or participation expense funds or both are available to support participation.
- The opportunity will not interrupt or interfere with an approved education or training assignment (where the opportunity is for an unpaid placement) or prevent return to a regular job that will be available shortly.

Orientation and Follow-up

The business plan should describe how participants will be managed to ensure that they are always involved in activities that support their getting back to work. Service delivery agents are expected to provide group orientations on available supports and the local labour market.

Service delivery agents are expected to monitor the implementation of Ontario Works on two levels:

- ongoing eligibility monitoring of recipients who are required to participate in Ontario Works and ongoing participation monitoring of voluntary participants
- ongoing contract compliance monitoring of participating organizations under contract with the service delivery agent to deliver Ontario Works services

An orientation to Ontario Works has been developed by the Ministry for all front-line staff. Detailed training is the responsibility of the municipality and is an allowable expense within Ontario Works funding.

Appeals Process

A person found to be in noncompliance with the requirements of the Ontario Works program is no longer eligible for financial assistance; the application for financial assistance may be refused or the assistance may be cancelled or reduced. The participant is not eligible for general assistance for the following periods:

- first occurrence: three months following the end of the second notice period
- each subsequent occurrence: six months following the end of the second notice period

A person may reapply for or request reinstatement of assistance after the cancellation or reduction period has expired if they are willing to comply with an approved agreement of Ontario Works requirements.

Voluntary participants are not subject to benefit cancellation or reduction. If they do not participate in Ontario Works as planned, they may be removed from active participation at the discretion of the service delivery agent. Participants in Ontario Works have the same regulatory right of appeal to the Social Assistance Review Board for refusal, cancellation or reduction of financial assistance as other people applying for or receiving assistance. They also have the same access to internal, non-statutory review processes, which follow a decision to cancel or reduce assistance. Participants are provided with written information about their rights and responsibilities, including their right of appeal, at the time of application.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

Ontario Works became applicable province-wide as of January 1, 1998. Twenty sites participated in the first or implementation phase of Ontario Works. As of January 1998, 63 of 65 municipalities had had their business plans approved.

The following economic conditions have generally been taken into account in applying the program in municipalities:

- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities
- employment trends
- unemployment rates
- financial assistance rates

Although most business plans speak to these conditions, they are not required to do so.

The province has established a Municipal Social Assistance Reserve of $700 million as a safeguard against unforeseen local economic circumstances.

Employment Equity and Displacement

Job placement agencies receive higher fees for placing participants with families than for placing singles (their fees are based on savings of financial assistance expenditures).

There are no special initiatives for women.

Community placements must not displace any paid employment in the participating organization (including any associated or related organization); for example,

- duties currently held by an employee
- duties performed by an employee who has been laid off and has recall rights under a collective agreement
- duties of an employee who is on a leave of absence

The private sector is regarded as a potential partner in terms of community placement, but it can only supply material or in-kind assistance and not placements themselves because of the potential for displacement.

Community Services

Integration of Community Resources

The business plan should describe strategies and local resources that the municipality will use to support the participation of community partners, including referrals from the Family Benefits Act within the community placement and employment strategies.

Service delivery agents match participants with available community participation placements that are sponsored by and under the direction of the community (community improvement projects), public organizations or non-profit organizations. Service delivery agents are expected to promote Ontario Works in their communities and to recruit participation from local community, public, non-profit and private-sector organizations.

Single-Window Access
Business plans are required to describe how the existing employment service infrastructure, both municipally and community managed, will be consolidated into a single employment program and refocused to support the delivery of Ontario Works.

As a result of a "who does what" exercise in the province, a number of important social, community health and housing programs have been brought together at the municipal level to create an integrated social and community health services system. The new arrangements have the following key features:

- consolidation of management and delivery of social and community health services at the municipal level, with the province establishing the legislative framework and program standards within which municipalities deliver services
- a reduction of the number of social and community health service delivery agents from several hundred to about 50 consolidated units by the time implementation is complete

Community Diversity
The business plan should describe how the municipality will work with key community partners to customize Ontario Works components to specific recipient groups to ensure that opportunities are available to and appropriate for the full range of recipients; for example,

- sole-support parents on social assistance who do not have to participate but who wish to do so
- people with disabilities who wish to participate
- participants from diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds in communities where they are significantly represented
- off-reserve aboriginal participants in communities where they are significantly represented
- recipients who must participate but who have face significant challenges in meeting the expectations present in most employment and community service settings

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

No evaluation framework has been developed for Ontario Works; however, the province requires that service delivery agents measure and evaluate recipient outcomes. The province has responsibility for monitoring province-wide data collection and reporting by service delivery agents. The province provides funding based on agreed-upon results, as described above under "Program Funding".

Municipalities will have the opportunity for year-to-year review of targets and adjusted funding to address unanticipated delivery factors and the achievement of units above anticipated levels. A feedback loop is built into the system. The province takes action if municipal targets are not met and if many municipalities report similar problems (i.e., a pattern is discerned).

No provincial budget has been established for evaluating Ontario Works. Municipalities may use some of their funding for evaluation if it is included in their business plans and approved by the province. Each service delivery agent collects and analyses the local data, but overall analysis is the responsibility of the province. The data are collected monthly by the municipalities and reported quarterly to the province according to the business plan. It is too early to determine the role of other possible partners – e.g., universities, community groups, specialized firms or program providers – in analysing the data.

Delivery agents are required to report on part-time and full-time employment outcomes and reduced welfare spending as a result of earnings.

Cost–Benefit Research

Business plans are required to demonstrate the following:

- Services are delivered as cost-effectively as possible, whether directly by municipalities or through the purchase of service arrangements with community agencies or private-sector firms (for employment placement).
- Services are available to all Ontario Works-eligible recipients in the community.
- Community and business groups capable of delivering high-quality services at reasonable cost have an opportunity to do so.
- Transitional costs such as start-up and termination are minimized.

The data collected will provide cost-effective information from the viewpoints of governments, taxpayers and service delivery agents. Data are collected on monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits.

Outcome Data

Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave financial assistance
- the proportion of participants who leave financial assistance
- the time required to find a job

No analysis has yet occurred, as data have just recently started to be collected.

The province is examining the possibility of collecting data about the types of jobs participants obtain. Data are incomplete about the employment earnings and family incomes of participants on exiting the program, as many leave the system without providing this information. Job placement agencies must meet certain outcome indicators to ensure, in part, that they are matching participants to jobs that will sustain their independence. The agencies are monitored for

- the percentage of their registrants who completely leave the financial assistance system
- increases in recipients using the supports to employment program, which reduces dependence on financial assistance
- the proportion of former participants returning to the welfare system within 6 and 12 months of the first employment start date

Participant Evaluation

To evaluate participants' continued interest in the program, provincial guidelines call for periodic reviews of participation agreements. To evaluate participants' performance in the program, service delivery agents are expected to monitor their ongoing eligibility. Eligibility monitoring is expected to include these minimum components:

- monitoring of the participant's attendance at referral, interview, placement or job
- monitoring of the participant's performance in all activities planned

Service delivery agents refer to their approved Ontario Works business plan and service contract for any additional requirements. It is expected that delivery agents will develop internal administrative processes to ensure that participating organizations relay monitoring information to them on a regular and timely basis and that the information is collected in an appropriate and verifiable way.

Data are not being collected to track changes in job readiness, as the principal underpinning of Ontario Works is "the shortest route to paid employment". Furthermore, information is not collected on other aspects of family well-being such as parents' and children's health and development or the participant's level of satisfaction with the program.

Use of Findings

Lessons learned about program delivery details during the early implementation of Ontario Works will be built into phase two (full implementation of the program).

Other Issues

Ontario officials expressed an interest in receiving information about the best practices, activities and directions of other provinces and territories, particularly in terms of the following:

- technology. What systems are being used for internal communication and data collection? Are there compatibility problems?
- caseworker-recipient ratios
- comparisons between centralized and decentralized models of delivery
- co-location with Human Resources Development Canada and other service delivery agencies
- salary wage structure. Should front-line workers be paid more than managers and, if so, how could this be accomplished?
- delegation of authority. What authority is delegated? How? What is the balance between delegation of authority and accountability?
- processes to build best practices into government programs and systems. How is best practice evaluated?
- multi-challenged recipients. What has proven effective in providing services to these recipients from a policy and program perspective?
- private-sector partnerships

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

A number of changes have occurred since the information outlined in this inventory was collected. The most significant was the introduction of new legislation in June 1997. The Social Assistance Reform Act fulfilled the government's public commitments for welfare reform through two included statutes:

- The Ontario Works Act reformed Ontario's welfare system and streamlined delivery at the municipal level.
- The Ontario Disability Support Program Act removed people with disabilities from welfare and created a separate income support program to meet their unique needs.

The Ontario Works Act introduced many further changes. The following changes became effective in January 1998:

- continuation of municipalities and First Nations communities as the delivery agents for welfare
- a new provincial–municipal cost-sharing relationship that became effective on January 1, 1998, and resulted in the province paying 80% of the costs of employment assistance (previously, the costs of some assistance had been met by 100% provincial funding).

Other changes became effective April 1, 1998, with transition regulations and May 1, 1998, with proclamation of the Ontario Works Act, which replaced the General Welfare Assistance Act. These changes include

- two forms of assistance in Ontario Works: employment assistance and financial assistance. The Act and Regulations prescribe employment assistance as community participation and other employment measures:
  - job search
  - job-search support services
  - referral to basic education and job-specific skills training
  - employment placement
  - an education or training program approved by the administrator
  - a self-employment activity approved by the administrator
  - supports to self-employment
  - a substance abuse recovery program
- participation agreement requirements. Any of the above activities may be set as eligibility requirements within a participation agreement; with the exception of participation in a substance abuse recovery program, lack of reasonable effort allows the reduction or cancellation of assistance. The participation agreement is Part 2 of the Application for Financial Assistance and must be signed by the applicant and his or her spouse for financial assistance to be granted. Dependent adults (age 18 and over) must also have participation requirements set in the signed agreement if the benefits for the family are to be maintained.
- introduction of requirements for sole-support parents, unless the sole-support parent has at least one child for whom publicly-funded education is not available.

All applicants and participants in Ontario Works are considered employable except those who are receiving financial assistance as an interim income support while they apply for Ontario Disability Support and those who are only in receipt of assistance for a child in temporary care.

Effective June 1, 1998, the Ontario Disability Support Program Act was proclaimed, replacing the Family Benefits Act. Additional regulations in the Ontario Works Act changed the notice, review and appeals process for Ontario Works. The change involves

- one written notice about the reduction, cancellation or adjustment in the level of financial assistance
- an applicant's or participant's application for internal review as a prerequisite for applying for a review to the Social Benefits Tribunal (the replacement body to the Social Assistance Review Board).

Contact

NAME: Cliodhna McMullin
TITLE: Director, Ontario Works Branch
ADDRESS: Ministry of Community and Social Services
880 Bay Street, 4th Floor, Room 434
Toronto, ON
M7A 2B6
E-MAIL: epbmcss1@idirect.com
TELEPHONE: (416) 326-8171
(416) 326-8205
FAX: (416) 326-9777

Primary Information Sources

- Interviews with provincial government officials, January 28 and 29, 1997
- Summary of the Ontario Works program
- *A Guide to Ontario Works*
- Program guidelines for early implementation of Ontario Works
- Guidelines for the development of business plans for early implementation of Ontario Works
- News release communique, June 12, 1996
- News release communique, January 14, 1997
- News release communique, January 3, 1997

Index of Acronyms
CHST - Canada Health and Social Transfer
FBA - Family Benefits Act
GWA - General Welfare Assistance
MET - Ministry of Education and Training
OSAP - Ontario Student Assistance Program
STEP - Supports to Employment Program

MANITOBA

Summary

Employment First, also known as the Employment and Income Assistance Program, is a program of the Department of Family Services. It supports employable social assistance recipients in finding work through the establishment of a mutual responsibility between the worker and the recipient. The responsibility of the recipient is to maintain an active job search. The responsibility of the worker is to provide the recipient with information on appropriate opportunities, to assist the recipient in identifying job search resources and to determine if the recipient is meeting the employment expectations. Employment First began May 1, 1996.

Employment First is applicable province-wide. It includes a changing variety of sub-initiatives targeted toward specific geographic areas, settings or types of recipients. Family Services has formed a partnership with the Department of Education and Training to provide training to help people prepare for job searches and subsequent employment. The Department of Education and Training also delivers a series of employment-based programs and services under its Community Partnerships and Employment Connections.

Participation in Employment First is mandatory for all income assistance recipients. If the recipient does not follow the employment plan, the worker may initiate remedial measures. Remedial measures may result in progressive budget reductions of up to $100. The initial benefit reduction is $50 per month. After six months of benefit reduction at the $50 level, there can be a further reduction of $50 per month to a maximum of $100. The worker reinstates the full benefits for which recipients are eligible as soon as recipients resume an appropriate employment enhancement activity or accept employment. Recipients have the right to appeal any decision; an appeals process has been established.

Recipients exempt from employment expectations include single parents with a child less than six, the parent of a dependent child more than six years of age who requires extensive care, people with disabilities, the elderly, people in authorized crisis facilities and people with physical or mental health problems. The employment expectation for a recipient who is a victim of abuse and is enrolled immediately after leaving a crisis intervention facility may also be deferred.

Local directors are expected to use their good judgement in implementing and administering the program. Employment First is sufficiently flexible to meet the special needs of a diversity of people, such as women, single parents, people with disabilities, aboriginal people, people with differing ethno-cultural backgrounds and Franco-Manitobans. The program was designed to ensure that participants not displace workers or volunteers in the local economy.

Participants must go through the program at an acceptable pace as outlined in their employment plan.

The Employment and Income Assistance budget allocation for 1996–97 was $391,190,300. The Making Welfare Work Allocation for 1996–97 was $3.5 million for Family Services and $3.8 million for Education and Training. In January 1997, the municipal caseload was 17,377 and the provincial caseload was 25,799. By January 1998, these numbers had gone down to 13,894 and 24,784, respectively.

Provincial caseloads for employable recipients have declined by over 13% since the implementation of welfare reform and the Employment First approach in May 1996. Municipal caseloads have declined by more than 30% for the same period.

Orientation is provided on-on-one and in group sessions. Where orientation sessions are available, it is expected that all single-parent and general assistance applicants attend. For follow-up, recipients must report at a frequency rate (usually monthly) agreed to in the employment plan. Also, counsellors may conduct as many home visits as necessary or may choose other forms of recipient contact.

Employment First is evaluated on the principle of what works best for whom. The general indicators used in determining the effectiveness or success of the program are a reduction in caseload and an increase in recipient earnings. The continued interest and satisfaction of participants in the program is also being evaluated. Findings will be used to determine future programming directions.

Welfare-to-work Programs

Program

Employment First; also known, in Manitoba's Department of Family Services, as the Employment and Income Assistance Program

Description

Employment First is a program of the Department of Family Services. It supports employable social assistance recipients in finding work through the establishment of a mutual responsibility between the worker and the recipient. The responsibility of the recipient is to maintain an active job search. The responsibility of the worker is to provide the recipient with information on appropriate opportunities, to assist the recipient in identifying job search resources and to determine if the recipient is meeting the employment expectations.

Employment First is applicable province-wide. It includes a changing variety of sub-initiatives targeted toward specific geographic areas, settings or types of recipients.

Goals

Employment First has the following goals:
- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment
- develop the short-term work skills of program participants
- develop the long-term work skills of program participants
- make employment more attractive financially than social assistance
- promote lasting connections to the labour market. The province continues to support the long-term plans of recipients and recognizes that people need experience to achieve long term-attachment to the labour force.
- reduce the rate at which people leave employment and return to social assistance
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance
- reduce poverty

Program Rationale

The Manitoba social assistance system has two tiers. Recipients of provincial assistance are primarily single parents and people with disabilities; municipalities provide assistance to all others. Although municipal recipients already had work expectations as a condition of assistance, changes to work expectations for provincial recipients mean that more provincial recipients are now deemed to be employable than in the past. In January 1997, the provincial government announced that the province would assume responsibility for delivery of all income assistance within the next 18 months.

Employment First was designed to assist income assistance recipients in achieving independence while reducing the province's market share in the business of welfare by using the least intrusive tools and interventions possible.

Employment First was initiated following the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), which allowed the province more flexibility in developing programs. The CHST has helped Manitoba to change the income assistance programming from a passive system to one based on a principle of reciprocal responsibility.

Program Activities

Main Activity

Employment First focuses on employment as the primary priority for recipients who are able to work. Staff members work with recipients to develop independence through employment.

Specific Activities

The following types of activities are covered by the program:

- adult basic education/literacy training (through Manitoba Education and Training)
- life skills training
- high-school completion
- post-secondary education (through the Study Assistance for Social Allowance Program for single parents and people with disabilities)
  - university
  - college
  - apprenticeship/trades
- job-readiness training
  - counselling
  - job search training
  - career planning
  - job referrals
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience in some specific interventions
- self-employment
- volunteer activities are promoted for people difficult to place as a step in enhancing their employability

During the initial contact with a potential recipient, employment expectations are assessed. Employable applicants are referred to an orientation session, if available, in preparation for their intake interview. All single-parent and general assistance applicants are expected to attend the orientation session. There is a 30% applicant slippage between the orientation session and those actually applying.

At the intake interview, potential recipients complete their application and discuss employment expectations. Employment history and personal job plan forms are completed with the help of a counsellor. The forms help applicants determine their employability and provide the social worker with the necessary information to assist in planning. If the worker and applicant cannot agree on a plan, the worker makes the final decision. The completed personal job plan form is signed by both the applicant and the worker and each receives a copy.

A number of specific interventions aimed at income assistance recipients are available at various times and locations. Current interventions include the following:

- *Manitoba Conservation Corps* Any interested recipient may apply to this program, which has been ongoing since May 1996. It is designed to enhance employability through work experience in conservation, environmental improvement and natural resources. Participants work at minimum wage for the number of hours equivalent to their income assistance entitlement. Work projects are identified by Manitoba Natural Resources. An evaluation is under way.

- *Opportunities for Employment* In May 1996 the province contracted with Manitoba Works Inc. to provide employment for recipients. The objective is to help recipients to find a minimum of 30 hours per week employment and to maintain employment for six months. This two-year pilot program began in 1996 with a budget of $210,000; Manitoba Works receives $4,000 for each participant. Of those placed, 50% are single parents, 25% are from two-parent families and 25% are single people without dependants. The program is being evaluated; it is anticipated that the $4,000 placement fee will be fully recovered after nine months of employment.

- *Northern Affairs Partnership* The objective of this program is to enable income assistance recipients to maintain or develop skills that will enhance their success in finding long-term employment while supporting the development of employment opportunities by Northern Community Councils. There are three primary partners – the Northern Community Councils, Manitoba Northern Affairs and Manitoba Family Services, which offers wage-based assistance. Priority is given to projects that offer a minimum of 420 hours of employment per person and enable people to become independent of income assistance. The program began in 1996 and is renewed annually.

- *Taking Charge* This program is a federal-provincial strategic initiative. It assists single parents in or near Winnipeg to attain economic self-sufficiency through labour market participation, thereby helping their children to escape the cycle of poverty and social dependency. Program activities include intake, assessment, literacy and upgrading, work entry, wage incentives, skills training, job preparation and placement, entrepreneurial and other support services. The storefront operation provides for a coordinated approach to offer programs and services in one location. The duration of a recipient's involvement is measured by an employability assessment and independence plan which describes the level of function: 1, job ready; 2, training ready; or 3, multi-barriered. This five-year initiative will run until March 31, 1999. Costs, excluding the employment and income assistance benefits, are estimated to be $26.2 million over the life of the project and are shared by Canada and Manitoba. Estimates of the project's expenditure of employment and income assistance benefits are at $32.0 million.

- *Rural Jobs* This project helps rural recipients enter or re-enter the workforce by providing grants to help pay salaries. It is available for all municipalities other than the City of Winnipeg.

- *Community Services Projects* Recipients in Winnipeg can participate in identified community services. These projects are used to assess the individual's employability and to provide work experience.

Training and Educational Activities

Family Services has formed a partnership with the Department of Education and Training to provide training to help people prepare for job searches and subsequent employment. The process is personalized to improve the quality of service to the individual while eliminating duplication and overlap in assessment services. During their intake interview, recipients may be referred to Education and Training programs for skills development or training in job readiness, academic upgrading, job-specific skills training, work experience or on-the-job training. After a job search, recipients may be referred for further training or work experience if the search was unsuccessful.

General assistance recipients may be assisted to participate in a secondary educational or an employment-focused vocational program if the educational plan is likely to lead to self-sufficiency or reduced dependency. The assessment is based on the individual's goals and the labour market demand in the area. Secondary education includes high school studies, basic academic upgrading and high school equivalency programs.

The Department of Education and Training also delivers a series of employment-based programs and services under its Community Partnerships and Employment Connections components.

Community Partnerships include contracts with non-profit, community-based organizations to develop and deliver a variety of activities aimed at preparing recipients for employment. Activities may include combinations of employability assessment, pre-employment preparation, academic or literacy training, specific skills training, on-the-job work experience and employment placement. Three sub-programs are Youth NOW, Labour Market Training and Community-Based Employability Projects:

- *Youth NOW (New Opportunities to Work)* contracts with training agencies and community groups to provide employability skills training and work experience or job placements. The training helps youth recipients (18 to 24 years of age) to prepare for and secure employment. Success is determined by the number of youth who secure employment after participating in the project.
- *Labour Market Training* provides recipients with specific skills training in high-demand occupations or occupations with recurring skills shortages. The program contracts with existing training institutions or agencies with a proven track record in the delivery of training leading to employment. Training includes an on-the-job component with an identified employer offering job opportunities. Trainers are responsible for assisting participants to obtain employment. Short-term, specialized training and longer-term accredited training are both included.
- *Community-Based Employability Projects* provides funding to non-profit community organizations to operate training and employment projects for people with disabilities. Projects include life skills training, pre-employment preparation and on-the-job work experience leading to employment.

There are other community-based projects that focus on income assistance recipients in general but are not specifically targeted to them.

Employment Connections programs and services include the Job Search Group, self-marketing resources, wage assistance to employers and the Industry-Based Training project.

Job Search Group is a four-week program to assist employment-ready recipients to market their skills to employers. Participants learn networking techniques, interview skills, effective job-search strategies and how to follow up employer contacts. Resources available for participants include photocopying, computer access, telephone, fax and mailing services.

Employment Connections also works in partnership with employers who are expanding their workforce by supporting the development of job-specific, workplace-based training plans tailored to the needs of the employer and the individual. Plans include job functions, competencies required and methods of training to be used. Contracts between the employers and Employment Connections specify terms and conditions of activities and the financial contributions of both parties.

Industry-Based Training supports job-specific, work-based training tailored to the needs of the employer. Training partnerships are developed with private sector employers who have identified skill shortages or are expanding their workforce. Training is brokered or in-house.

Other education and training programs include the following:

- *New Careers North* partners with employers, community organizations and federal and local governments to support skills training projects that meet the needs of northern Manitoba communities by helping to design, develop and train and by providing funding support.
- *Adult Literacy and Continuing Education* is responsible for the coordination and management of a range of community-based and workplace literacy programs that provide employed and unemployed adults, who lack a high school education, with literacy and numeracy skills required for daily living at home, at work and in the community.
- Part-time training for part-time workers is under development.
- A self-employment program is under development.
- *Study Assistance for Social Allowance Recipients (SASAR)* is available to sole-support parents and people with disabilities who have been in receipt of income assistance for six months before attending school. Participation is also approved for other recipients who can demonstrate that their educational plan has a reasonable chance of leading to employment. SASAR allows recipients to apply for Canada Student Loans and Manitoba Student Loans for full-time, post-secondary studies to cover tuition fees, books, day care fees up to $500 per year, local transportation and miscellaneous expenses of $12 per week while attending school.

Employment-focused vocational programs are generally short-term (one year or less) and have the goal of developing or enhancing specific skills for which there is a reasonable labour market demand in the area in which the participant resides.

The Employment Development Centres are the delivery arms of Education and Training programming except for Youth NOW, which has its own provincial staff. All training, including that delivered through Youth NOW, is contracted with outside groups.

Employment-Based Activities

Employers from the private sector, public sector and non-profit sector can participate in the program's employment-based activities through Employment Connections. The only program criteria for jobs are that employers must offer permanent employment opportunities and that positions must not displace existing workers.

Job-finding assistance includes
- identifying job openings
- marketing participants to employers
- arranging interviews for participants
- a job-search and self-marketing centre that provides resources for people to undertake their own job search

The program includes measures to build strong links with local employers to help participants gain employment experience and find jobs.

Severely disadvantaged or multi-challenged recipients have not been a focus in Manitoba, but Family Services and Education and Training are now beginning to examine this issue. Currently, it is recommended that the worker attempt to get these individuals involved in volunteer activities to help them ease into competitive employment.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

Family Services and Education and Training were responsible for designing Employment First. Most of the specific interventions were also designed in-house. Opportunities for Employment included the participation of the Mennonite Central Committee of Manitoba, and the design of Taking Charge consisted of a multi-staged consultation with program providers, social assistance recipients and academics.

Education and Training was the only department involved in the design of the programs that fall under its auspices.

Responsibility for Implementation

Family Services and Training and Education are responsible for implementing programs for recipients who fall under provincial responsibility.

The Manitoba social assistance system has two tiers. Recipients of provincial assistance are primarily single parents and people with disabilities; municipalities provide assistance to all other recipients. In January 1997, the provincial government announced that the province would assume responsibility for delivery of all income assistance for the next 18 months.

The province regulates the levels of benefits and sets standards. Municipalities operate under provincial regulations. The province shares in the costs of municipal social assistance. The funding formula depends on the nature of the individual and the financial situation of the municipality. There are 185 municipalities in Manitoba.

Recipients in rural municipalities use the same Training and Education programs as provincial recipients. These rural recipients account for less than 10% of all income assistance recipients in Manitoba. Of the municipal caseload, 90% is in Winnipeg; there are only 1,700 cases serviced by the 184 other municipalities.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

There is some local autonomy in the implementation of the program. District directors are expected to use their good judgement in implementing and administering the program. The reforms are tailored to each area of the province and the opportunities available there.

Duration of the Program

Employment First began May 1, 1996, and is ongoing.

Participants cannot go through the program at their own pace. The following are considered to be acceptable minimum standards for job searches and other employment activities:

- An employment activity report is completed by the individual and returned to the worker. The frequency of reporting depends on the agreement made between the worker and the individual in the personal job plan. Generally, the recipient is expected to report monthly.
- The number of job-related contacts required for a specific community, area or recipient is established at the District Office based on employment factors within the community. A combination of contacts and other activities may be negotiated between the recipient and the worker. The suggested guideline in areas where there is a reasonable number of employment opportunities is 15 contacts per reporting period.
- Contacts are appropriate to the individual's personal job plan. The plan is intended to be a tool and may need to be revised to fit changing circumstances. In such cases, any changes must be made formally and be agreed to by both the recipient and the worker.
- Contacts are verifiable.
- Recipients involved in specific programs meet the participation standards set by that program.
- Recipients accept any reasonable job offer.
- Recipients consult with their worker before taking action if difficulties arise on the job or at home that may affect their employment or their plan.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

Financial assistance is provided to program participants on the basis of their eligibility for general social assistance. The following assistance is provided:

- wage supplements through Education and Training
- compensation for job-related expenses essential to employment

- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction
- compensation for child-care expenses
- transportation subsidies
- housing subsidies. Repairs to homes owned by recipients are allowed if they are essential to the maintenance of the building.
- moving expenses. There are occasions when recipients move solely for the purpose of pursuing an education. Moves of this type are considered to be part of an educational plan and the cost is treated as an educational special need.
- assistance for people with disabilities. An additional monthly benefit of $70 is provided for each person living in the community.
- supplemental health care (for basic health care). Single parents can keep health benefits for up to one year after they are employed.
- dental care
- drug and optical benefits and services that are considered essential

The rates for people with disabilities, elderly people, women in crisis shelters and single parents with children less than six did not change in 1996. All other recipients had their rates reduced effective May 1, 1996, to ensure that the most in need are the least affected by rate changes. The new focus of programming is on employment – giving people who are able to work more opportunities to increase their income through employment.

Deadlines and Subsidies

Program participants may be subject to sanctions if certain program conditions are not met. If the recipient chooses, by not participating or reporting, not to follow the personal job plan, the worker may initiate remedial measures.

Remedial measures may result in progressive budget reductions of up to $100. The initial benefit reduction is $50 per month. After six months of benefit reduction at the $50 level, there can be a further reduction of $50 per month to a maximum of $100.

The goal of the personal job plan is to ensure that recipients are actively involved in activities that will enhance their employability. The worker reinstates the full benefits for which recipients are eligible as soon as recipients resume an appropriate employment enhancement activity or accept employment.

Individuals receiving educational costs to attend school must maintain satisfactory levels of attendance and progress standards to continue to receive assistance. The minimum standards for job search and other employment activities are outlined above (see "Duration of the Program").

Participants can have additional sources of income and remain in the program. Those working are able to keep all their wages and may receive a top-up to their paycheque.

In calculating the financial resources of an applicant or recipient, up to $100 of net monthly earnings, excluding earnings from an employment program, are exempted for each employed or self-employed person. In addition, single parents and two-parent families where both parents are working can also exempt 25% of net income above the $100 and child-care expenses in excess of $1.40 a day per child. The household's gross monthly income is considered a financial resource to the extent that this amount represents 135% or more of the household's cost of basic necessities.

Recipients who are accepted into approved self-employment programs can segregate their business income from their income assistance eligibility for up to one year, that is, they can continue on assistance for this a year without affecting their entitlement

Child support payments received by program participants affect the amount of financial assistance provided to them. Spousal and child support payments are a critical source of financial support to single parents, and it is expected that, wherever applicable and possible, an applicant or recipient will pursue such support as part of a strategy of maximizing financial independence and reducing dependency on assistance from this program.

Financial Incentives for Employers

Through Employment Connections, employers will be assisted, as required, to develop a training plan outlining job functions, competencies required and methods of training to be used. Employment Connections programs and services include industry-based training, job search and self-marketing resources for recipients, wage assistance to employers and part-time training.

Contracts between employers and Employment Connections specify the terms and conditions of project activities and the financial contributions of both parties.

Program Funding

The Employment and Income Assistance budget allocation for 1996–97 is $391,190,300. The Making Welfare Work Allocation for 1996–97 is $3.5 million for Family Services and $3.8 million for Education and Training.

Cutbacks in funding have not had an impact on staffing in Employment First.

Subsidized Child Care

Recipients are required to use subsidized child-care services whenever possible. Documentation must be received from the Child Day Care Office about the unavailability of subsidized day care before assistance may be provided for unsubsidized services. Unsubsidized child care must be licensed. In the absence of any other type of care, private child care may be used.

Day care regulations permit child-care centres and family day-care providers to charge parents up to $2.40 a day per child above the maximum fee subsidized by the Child Day Care Program. The recipient is responsible for paying the first $1.40 of these extra charges. Excess special needs may be used to pay any additional charges, up to $1 per day per child.

Payment for child-care expenses provided by relatives is not allowed as an expense in calculating a person's income assistance.

Child-care is available for all as required, including during training.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

Employment expectations are established for all employable people, including single parents, people in unorganized territories and the dependent children of these people who are 16 years of age and not in school. Single parents with a child less than six may be exempt from these expectations if they have not received assistance, including basic assistance, while participating in training or other activities to improve their employability. Employment expectations may also be deferred for the parent of a dependent child more than six years of age who requires extensive care. The child may or may not be in school.

Employment expectations do not apply to people with disabilities, the elderly and people in authorized crisis facilities.

A recipient with physical or mental health problems may be deferred from completing the personal job plan pending medical advice from the recipient's doctor. The medical advice is used as a guide to subsequent completion of the job plan and the nature of the employment expectations.

For recipients involved in a course of treatment or rehabilitation, the personal job plan records this as an employability measure and takes rehabilitation progress into account, with appropriate monitoring conditions.

The employment expectation for a recipient who is a victim of abuse and is enrolled immediately after leaving a crisis intervention facility may also be deferred. The length of the deferral depends on safety issues in addition to the emotional and physical capacity to work.

Caseloads

In January 1997, the municipal caseload was 17,377 and the provincial was 25,799. By January 1998, these numbers had gone down to 13,894 and 24,784, respectively.

All employable income assistance recipients participate in Employment First, which strives to serve everyone in need.

The following types of information about participants are gathered:
- demographic
- education and training history
- employment history
- medical-social history
- child-care needs and use
- length of time in receipt of social assistance
- employability assessment

Information is also gathered on categories of recipient enrolment (e.g., single parents, single people and people with disabilities).

Participation in some of the specific interventions, as of January 31, 1997, is as follows:
- 73 recipients in Manitoba Conservation Corps
- 260 in Opportunities for Employment
- 61 in Northern Affairs Partnerships
- 1,032 in Taking Charge

Nature of Participation

Participation in Employment First is mandatory for income assistance recipients.

To remain eligible for benefits, recipients must participate in certain activities as agreed in the job plan. If the recipient chooses, by not participating or reporting, not to follow the plan, the worker may initiate remedial measures.

People with children less than six who have received support for a job search but do not have employment expectations placed on them are not subject to remedial measures. If they choose not to follow their plan, the worker will stop monitoring the job search. People who have received additional supports and have agreed to employment expectations are subject to the same remedial measures as those with older children. People with children less than six are encouraged to begin to think about an employment plan and use the time until their youngest child turns six to prepare for employment.

Although family responsibilities present an additional barrier to employment for single parents, this barrier can be overcome. Once children are in school barriers are reduced, as parents have additional time available to search for jobs and to take on employment expectations.

Recipients are expected to take advantage of any opportunities, including participation in special interventions. Benefits for single people could be suspended if they refuse to participate and benefits could be reduced for people with children. As an incentive to participate in special interventions, recipients receive a bus pass, a monthly incidental allowance of $25 and work-related items as appropriate.

Recipients who are unable to search for work immediately may require a deferral of employment expectations until the situation has been resolved or stabilized. The recipient or the counsellor may identify the need for a deferral. Together, the recipient and counsellor determine the length of the deferral based on the reason for the request. Where the counsellor is in doubt about the need for or length of a deferral, the situation is reviewed in consultation with the District Director. Where deferral requests are reasonable, the requests are granted.

Factors to consider in deferring employment expectations include the following:
- temporary inability to work due to physical or mental health problems
- child over six years with special needs
- family violence
- availability of supports, including child care

Remedial measures have been put in place to ensure that recipients meet their employment expectations.

Remedial Measures for Recipients with Children
Remedial measures may result in progressive budget reductions of up to $100. The initial budget reduction is $50 per month. After six months (consecutive or non-consecutive) of budget reduction at the $50 level, there can be a further reduction of $50 per month for a maximum of $100 per month. The District Director has the discretion to decide whether a further reduction is warranted.

Quitting a job may result in an immediate benefit reduction whether the recipient quit the job before applying for assistance or while on assistance.

The benefit reductions may apply to members of the household who are not following their plan. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds.

Recipients who have dependent children and who choose not to participate in employability enhancement activities may opt for immediate benefit reduction. In this situation the initial reduction would be made immediately and the further reduction would apply after six months. The recipient could choose to opt back in at any time.

Remedial Measures for Recipients without Children

If recipients are not following their personal job plan, remedial measures may result in an end to benefits for both single people and two-adult families without children.

If an individual quits a job, benefits may be denied, discontinued, reduced or suspended. The decision of the worker is based on the same factors as for recipients with children.

If a recipient is not taking the necessary steps to become employed, the worker provides counselling support. The counselling involves working with the recipient to identify the necessary steps to secure employment and the means to carry them out.

The goal of the personal job plan is to ensure that recipients are actively involved in activities that will enhance their employability. The worker reinstates the full benefits for which recipients are eligible as soon as recipients resume an appropriate employment enhancement activity or accepts employment.

Quitting a job may result in an immediate benefit reduction whether the recipient quit the job before applying for assistance or while on assistance. Factors considered in determining if the recipient took all reasonable measures to resolve matters in the workplace before quitting may include the following:

- available alternatives
- family responsibilities
- safety issues
- harassment (sexual or other)
- discrimination because of race, colour, religion or membership in an association, organization or union of workers
- dangerous working conditions
- major changes in the conditions or terms of the job
- excessive overtime or an employer's refusal to pay overtime

- difficult relationship with a supervisor for whom the recipient was not primarily responsible
- illegal practices on the part of the employer
- pressure to quit from the employer or fellow workers

The recipient has the right to appeal any decision.

Orientation and Follow-up

The potential applicant may make initial contact with the program in a number of ways – by telephone, by dropping in to a District Office or, in a remote community, by obtaining an information and application package or by attending a group registration session.

During the initial contact, staff members

- provide basic information to the potential applicant about employment and income assistance;
- make a preliminary assessment of whether assistance is an appropriate resource
- determine the potential applicant's current circumstances to categorical eligibility criteria
- determine whether the program's employment expectation is applicable
- determine whether immediate financial assistance is required and, if so, provide assistance
- arrange an intake appointment for potential applicants not subject to employment expectations
- invite single-parent and general-assistance applicants to a pre-intake orientation session that provides a full description of the program and application materials, or, if an orientation session is not available, provide the potential applicant with a pre-intake information package containing employment history and personal job plan forms, which the individual will be expected to complete and bring to the intake appointment
- refer people to other resources as appropriate

Where orientation sessions are available, it is expected that all single parent and general assistance applicants attend. This includes single parents of dependent children less than six, who are expected to attend to be better prepared for an intake appointment and to obtain information on employment expectations.

The orientation sessions provide general information about the rights and obligations of income assistance recipients and ensure that those interested are aware of work expectations.

Recipients are assigned a worker who provides information and assistance within a reasonable time frame. The frequency of reporting by the recipient depends on the agreement made between the worker and the recipient in the personal job plan. Generally, the recipient is expected to report monthly.

Counsellors may conduct as many home visits as necessary based on the recipient's circumstances. Home visits have four objectives:

- to promote the recipient's self-sufficiency
- to exchange information
- to determine other agency involvement
- to examine verification and control issues

Instead of or in addition to a home visit, workers may decide to use other forms of recipient contact to review issues.

Appeals Process

An appeals process has been established. Applicants or recipients may appeal to the Appeal Board for any of the following reasons:

- they were not allowed to apply or re-apply for social allowance, general assistance or municipal assistance
- their request for assistance was not decided upon within a reasonable time
- their application for assistance was denied
- their social allowance, general assistance or municipal assistance was cancelled, suspended, varied or withheld
- the amount granted was insufficient to meet their needs

The District Director of Income Security is required to give written notice to the applicant or recipient of any decision that denies, cancels, suspends, withholds or reduces assistance. Included in the letter is a paragraph explaining the individual's right and means of appeal.

The steps in the appeal process are as follows:

- The District Director reviews the appeal notice when received.
- The District Director provides a written report to the Social Services Advisory Committee (SSAC).
- The SSAC holds a hearing and makes a decision.
- The department has 30 days to appeal.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

The following provincial economic conditions were taken into account in designing the program:

- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities
- employment trends
- unemployment rates
- social assistance rates

Similar programs were examined. Visits were made to New Brunswick and Alberta to examine their welfare systems and programs. Comparisons were made with other provinces and the literature was reviewed.

Goals and actions included in the personal job plan match the community resources available, such as day-care, transportation and jobs. The steps included in a personal job plan must be realistic for individuals for the area in which they live and the job opportunities available at the time.

Employment-related design considerations included the following:

- Local job openings and skills requirements had to match the skills program participants had or would develop during the program.
- An assessment was conducted to ensure that the future local employment requirements were part of the program design.
- The unemployment rate and other employment trends of the geographic area were taken into account when designing sub-programs.
- The social assistance rate of the geographic area was taken into account.

Employment Equity and Displacement

The program design takes into account the fact that women and men tend to predominate in different jobs; however, no particular consideration was given to promoting well-paid jobs for women. Some of the Training and Education programs are aimed at single parents, most of whom are women.

Provincial affirmative-action human resource policies promote the hiring of women, people with disabilities, aboriginal people, ethno-cultural people and Franco-Manitobans in Employment First positions. There are also designated bilingual positions.

The program was designed to ensure that participants not displace

- workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy
- volunteers in the unpaid economy

Every agreement between the province and employers includes a general requirement that any job created does not cause layoffs.

No penalties are imposed on employers who use program participants as a source of cheap labour, thereby displacing regular workers, because it has not been an issue.

Community Services

Integration of Community Services

Goals and actions included in the personal job plan match or are consistent with resources available in the community, such as day-care, transportation and jobs.

If there is a need for counselling (e.g., for stress or substance abuse), the individual is referred to the appropriate community resource. Included in community resources are those available to meet the special needs of some groups of participants, such as people with disabilities and victims of spousal abuse.

Single-Window Access

Training, employment programs and income support services provided by various levels of government and departments have been coordinated. This reorganization has facilitated the implementation of welfare-to-work programs. For example, a new, coordinated approach has been developed with Education and Training and other government departments to provide skills development and training that will prepare people for work. Through this coordinated approach, Manitoba plans to continue to identify sectors of the economy that show opportunities for growth and job creation.

Community Diversity

Employment First is sufficiently flexible to meet the special needs of a diversity of people, such as women, people with disabilities, aboriginal people, people with differing ethno-cultural backgrounds and Franco-Manitobans.

This flexibility is accomplished by several means, including the following:

- The income assistance rate structure is sensitive to different groups, e.g., single parents and people with disabilities.
- An affirmative action human resource policy exists in Manitoba.

- Some positions call for bilingual incumbents.
- The province works through agencies run by aboriginal people for the delivery of some programs.
- The province encourages linkages with expert groups.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

Employment First is evaluated on the principle of what works best for whom. The general indicators used in determining the effectiveness or success of the program are a reduction in caseload and an increase in recipient earnings.

The provincial government is responsible for the overall analysis of the data. An in-house team has been formed to track information about the program in a seamless manner. Team members consist of representatives from Family Services, Education and Training and Treasury Board.

There will be an external evaluation of Taking Charge. A request for proposals has been sent out to determine the interest in undertaking the evaluation. The evaluation of Taking Charge will provide benchmarks for the other special interventions; a comparative analysis will be undertaken whereby data will be gathered from the other interventions and compared with data from Taking Charge.

$200 thousand is the evaluation budget for Taking Charge. Although there is no evaluation budget for the other special interventions, outcomes will be tracked. There is no prescribed budget for the evaluation of Employment First.

The evaluation of Employment First is being undertaken in-house; the Management Information System is being used. Contracting out for pieces of the evaluation will occur if and as required.

Baseline data are collected from information entered on the following forms:

- Employment and Income Assistance Application
- E and IA Employment History and Personal Job Plan
- E and IA Employability Assessment

Much of the information gathered about Education and Training programs is based on data from intake forms; data include information on target group membership, prior employment and educational level. When a person leaves a program, information is collected on whether the individual completed the program and, if not, why not. Internal (statistical) evaluations are undertaken on the Education and Training programs.

Interviews for program evaluation are conducted with participants, administrators, participating employers and program providers.

Cost–Benefit Research

Cost–benefit research is part of the program evaluation. Return is measured against investment. Included in the return is the length of time people stay off welfare. The province is looking at how to stretch that period.

The evaluation will determine if the program is cost-effective from the point of view of

- social assistance recipients
- governments
- local employers
- taxpayers

Monetary costs and benefits are being measured, but non-monetary aspects are not.

Outcome Data

Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance
- the number of participants who get jobs
- the extent to which program participants retain the jobs they get
- the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare
- the nature of the jobs obtained by program participants (full-time, part-time, short-term, long-term, seasonal or temporary)
- the level of jobs obtained by program participants (entry level, pay and skill levels). Most jobs obtained are at the minimum wage, currently $5.40/hour.
- the types of occupations obtained by program participants
- employment earnings
- family income in terms of both spouses but not including the children in the family

Officials also hope to be able to collect data about the time required to find a job. They believe that the elements are in place in the system that would enable them to do so.

A priority for Family Services is to assist teenagers, with or without children, to complete high school. Therefore, the program does not collect data on teenagers getting jobs.

Participant Evaluation

The continued interest of participants in the program is being evaluated. Program participants may lose access to supplements or subsidies based on this evaluation.

The goal of the personal job plan is to ensure that recipients are actively involved in activities that will enhance their employability. The worker reinstates the full benefits for which recipients are eligible as soon as recipients resume an appropriate employment enhancement activity or accept employment.

Individuals receiving educational costs to attend school must maintain satisfactory levels of attendance and progress standards, determined by Employment and Income Assistance, to continue to receive assistance to pursue an educational program. (Minimum standards for job search and other employment activities are outlined in the section called Duration of the Program.)

Data are being collected to track changes in job readiness. An employability assessment form is completed for each recipient.

The participants' level of satisfaction with the program is also assessed. Participants involved in special interventions are asked about their level of satisfaction with the program toward the end of their involvement in the intervention. Participants are asked if the service received matched their expectations.

Program officials are attempting to determine, as part of the evaluation, the types of programs that are most suitable to specific groups of income assistance recipients. This is a work in progress.

Use of Findings

The findings of the evaluation will be used to determine future direction. The evaluation results will be used to help decide whether to

- expand the program
- initiate new programs
- redirect and realign current programs

Other Issues

As no evaluations have yet been completed, it is too early to identify problems or concerns of a substantive nature. There have been early operational issues as the business of the Department has changed from a passive, primarily cheque-producing program to a proactive one geared to helping people find employment.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

Provincial caseloads for employable recipients have declined by over 13% since the implementation of welfare reform and the Employment First approach in May 1996. Municipal caseloads have declined by more than 30% for the same period.

No major changes to Employment First have taken place since the information included in this Inventory was gathered. Some fine-tuning has occurred.

Contacts

NAME: Dan Haughey
TITLE: Executive Director of Welfare Reform
ADDRESS: Manitoba Family Services
Employment and Income Assistance
305 – 114 Garry Street
Winnipeg, MN
R3C 4V7
E-MAIL:
TELEPHONE: (204) 945-5795
FAX: (204) 945-0082

NAME: Mary Lou Kuxhouse
TITLE: Executive Director, Employment and Training Services Branch
ADDRESS: Manitoba Education and Training
400 – 209 Notre Dame Avenue
Winnipeg, MN
R3B 1M9
E-MAIL:
TELEPHONE: (204) 945-6256
FAX: (204) 945-0221

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Index of Acronyms

CHST - Canada Health and Social Transfer
SASAR - Study Assistance for Social Allowance Recipients
SSAC - Social Services Advisory Committee

SASKATCHEWAN

Summary

Saskatchewan Training Strategy (STS): Bridges to Employment is a program of the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. It is implemented in cooperation with a variety of partners, including regional colleges, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, New Careers Corporation (NCC), employers and community-based organizations, including aboriginal communities. STS began in April 1997 and will be implemented over three years.

The program is designed to strengthen the linkages between skills training programs, jobs and the labour market for all Saskatchewan people, including social assistance recipients, and to develop a skilled workforce relevant to Saskatchewan's labour market.

Career services help social assistance recipients to gain access to employability-related education and experience and to formulate an action plan. Recipients who have multiple barriers to employment are referred to work preparation centres. Others pursue training or education and remain on social assistance while attending their course. Some recipients undertake work experience or on-the-job training and receive a wage.

Provincial social assistance recipients are eligible for all programs funded through STS. There are some program-specific criteria. For example, recipients wanting to upgrade their academic skills have to be 18 years of age and may be required to complete some academic testing such as the Canadian Test of Basic Skills. The employment programs offered through NCC are available only to social assistance recipients.

The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan requires all employable recipients to develop a plan for independence. Benefits may be withheld from recipients who refuse to pursue opportunities for self-sufficiency. Appeals processes are determined within individual programs and delivery agents. Processes have been established in the public training institutions for students, within the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training for the provincial training and youth allowances, and within the Department of Social Services for social assistance benefits.

There is local autonomy and flexibility in the design and implementation of the program. STS promotes equity, fairness and diversity throughout the training and employment system. It is developing a system-wide approach to equity that will work toward representative participation of equity groups; identify and remove physical, cultural and gender barriers to successful participation; and require inclusive approaches such that programs fit the needs of participants from different groups. Programs funded through STS do not displace workers, as they encourage new job growth or retrain existing employees.

NCC receives $11,884,000 to provide career and employment programs and services for social assistance recipients. Other STS program allocations include the following: JobStart/Future Skills, $10,401,260; basic education and literacy, $13,168,000; provincial training allowance, $18,629,000; provincial youth allowance, $1,400,000. In 1997-98, employment programs offered through NCC provided 1,500 opportunities for social assistance recipients in subsidized employment and another 1,000 in non-subsidized placements.

Recipients who are referred to NCC receive either group or individual orientation to the programs and services available. Recipients in NCC programs are monitored by staff. After completing a program, recipients may return to NCC if further services are required. NCC staff also maintain contact with recipients who enter programs delivered through other agencies, such as basic education programs, to provide any needed support.

STS is committed to establishing an accountability framework and measures for assessing progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the training strategy, and to implementing processes for evaluating and monitoring programs and services. Work began in 1997–98 to identify expected program and service outcomes and ways to measure and assess them.

Experience thus far with STS has suggested implications for the ongoing and future design of programs in terms of partnerships (these are complex and take time and effort), sustainable employment (investing in employees through wage subsidies is more effective than make-work projects), technology (information systems must be upgraded) and co-location (service coordination and integration for recipients continues to be difficult to achieve).

On April 1, 1998, the Canada–Saskatchewan Agreement on Labour Market Development came into effect, giving Saskatchewan responsibility to design and deliver employment programs and services funded through Employment Insurance.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Program

Saskatchewan Training Strategy (STS): Bridges to Employment

Description

STS Bridges to Employment is a program of the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. It is implemented in cooperation with a variety of partners, including regional colleges, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, New Careers Corporation, employers and community-based organizations.

The program is designed to strengthen the linkages between skills training programs, jobs and the labour market for all Saskatchewan people, including social assistance recipients.

Goals

STS has the following goals:

- Develop a skilled workforce relevant to Saskatchewan's labour market:
  - Develop better labour market information and planning at regional, sectoral and provincial levels.
  - Increase access and make skills training more timely and relevant to industry and community employment needs.
  - Increase the responsiveness of the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification program to better meet industry needs.
  - Make basic education more responsive to the education, training and employment needs of learners and employers.
- Enhance access and support opportunities for all learners:
  - Assist low-income learners to gain access to training.
  - Maximize recognition and transfer of learning to increase mobility and access for learners.
  - Provide improved access to career and employment services to support people in making their career plans and obtaining training or employment.
  - Support social assistance recipients in developing their skills and finding sustainable jobs.
  - Promote equity, fairness and diversity throughout the training and employment system.

- Create a coherent, effective and sustainable delivery system:
  - Develop an integrated regional delivery system for training and labour market services.
  - Strengthen the provincial role of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology in support of STS.
  - Expand partnerships with First Nations and Métis institutions and services to better identify and meet the training and employment needs of aboriginal people.
  - Improve coordination and integration of federal and provincial employment programs and labour market services.
  - Establish funding, evaluation and accountability mechanisms for achieving the training strategy.
  - Develop ongoing forums for collaboration in implementing, evaluating and improving the training strategy.

Program Rationale

STS Bridges to Employment was introduced in April 1997 in an effort to redirect training and labour market initiatives by integrating social and economic development objectives. The program was developed to ensure that the most disadvantaged in society benefit from the jobs created through the province's economic growth. The strategy supports economic development, poverty reduction, social assistance redesign and the integration of aboriginal people in the labour market.

STS supports economic development by preparing people for jobs in an expanding economy through increased responsiveness to labour market needs, regional and industry partnerships, labour market planning, increased involvement of employers in training and closer alignment of skill development with industry needs, both short-term and longer-term.

The program supports increased integration of social assistance recipients in the workforce by establishing training and employment programs, learner support measures, and regional and sectoral partnerships. It is hoped that these measures will reduce recipients' dependence on the state and increase the diversity and representativeness of the Saskatchewan workforce.

STS requires public institutions, employers, unions, community organizations, government departments and other partners to work together. The cooperation of these groups and interests is crucial to the development of integrated labour market services and the array of education and training opportunities essential to Saskatchewan's economic and social priorities.

History

A major initiative of STS is the integration of New Careers Corporation (NCC) and its programs into the provincial system of training and labour market.

NCC, an earlier version of welfare-to-work, was established in May 1984 by Order in Council under the Crown Corporations Act. In the same year a set of employment and training programs was established in the Department of Social Services (DSS). In July 1992, the DSS programs were transferred to NCC, giving the corporation responsibility for all training and employment programs for people receiving social assistance.

In March 1993, responsibility for NCC was transferred to the Minister of Education, Training and Employment as part of larger government reorganization. In December 1995, when the department was restructured, NCC began reporting to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. With the introduction of STS, NCC has been more comprehensively integrated with skills training.

Program Activities

Main Activity

STS is designed to develop a skilled workforce relevant to Saskatchewan's labour market.

Specific Activities

The following types of activities are encompassed by the training strategy:

- labour market information services
- career planning, counselling and assessment
- job development, search and referral services
- adult basic education and high school completion
- literacy training
- second-language training
- work-based training
- apprenticeship
- technical and vocational education
- job-readiness and work-experience opportunities
- income support for trainees

Career services help social assistance recipients to gain access to the above activities and to formulate an action plan. Recipients who have multiple barriers to employment are referred to work preparation centres. Others pursue training or education and remain on social assistance while attending their course. Some recipients undertake work experience or on-the-job training and receive a wage.

Training and Educational Activities

The focus of STS is to expand opportunities for training and education that respond to the needs both of learners and of the labour market. Partnerships are being developed with industry, communities, training institutions, aboriginal organizations and other government departments and agencies to provide these opportunities. Training and education activities include the following:

- enhancing access to improved career and employment services. The focus of enhanced access is regional, but STS also builds on existing strengths within the system, improving partnerships at the local, regional and provincial levels to plan and deliver effective services. Information technology and multimedia are used to deliver career and employment services and to expand participants' access to those services. This approach also involves working with community organizations and the K-12 school system to coordinate career services. People are referred to the agency that can best meet their needs. A provincial career hotline complements career service at the local level.
- providing basic education and related skills development to respond to learners' needs for language, literacy, academic upgrading and employability skills. In 1997–98, several basic education programs were consolidated to provide greater access and flexibility for learners and to stabilize program funding. A new program – Links to Employment – was implemented to encourage workplace and family literacy, linkages to skills training or jobs, use of technology and partnerships with communities.
- enhancing access and supporting basic education and opportunities for all learners. A provincial training allowance consolidates existing income support programs for low-income students (including social assistance recipients who are enrolled in basic education and related courses). Eligibility for income support has been tied directly to low income, and a common level of assistance, based on family size, has been established. Income support funds for basic education have been established, partly through the transfer of training funds from social services. An agreement is being negotiated with the federal government for providing loans and grants to trainees under Employment Insurance.
- enhancing opportunities for youth on social assistance to become self-sufficient. A pilot project – Youth Futures – has been implemented to test approaches for providing youth on social assistance with education, training, work experience and other supports. A community-based steering committee that includes representation from many interests (e.g., First Nations, youth, community-based organizations and the education and training system) is delivering the pilot project.

- enhancing work-based training opportunities. Job Start/Future Skills is a program for unemployed people seeking jobs and for existing workers needing retraining. It is designed to accommodate workplace changes and new technologies. About 30% of Job Start/Future Skills trainees are social assistance recipients. The program supports work-based training with employers and short-term skills training through public training institutions to meet immediate industry needs.
- testing innovative ways to assist Saskatchewan people in gaining skills and sustainable employment through pilot projects under the Canada–Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement. The pilot projects include labour market information, career services and work–study initiatives. Several work–study projects that serve social assistance recipients and other disadvantaged groups are being implemented. Work–study projects must
  - address local labour market needs or opportunities
  - encourage partnerships between industry and communities
  - be innovative
  - provide employment opportunities for designated groups

Employment-Based Activities
STS focuses on sustainable employment sectors, with specific emphasis on the private sector and growth sectors in the regions. Because it is crucial to identify the labour market needs, STS takes a proactive approach; that is, program implementers are expected to function proactively and participants are expected to develop a plan for sustainable work.

Under STS, new employment programs for social assistance recipients include the following:
- Bridges to Employment programs to provide basic skills and work experience for people who are not ready for jobs
- work placement programs to support subsidized and non-subsidized placements with private sector employers
- community placement programs to support subsidized and non-subsidized placements with non-government organizations and municipalities (including funds to cover project supervision costs)
- stronger linkages between training and employment with improved program and employer coordination

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design and Implementation

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training has the lead for the Saskatchewan Training Strategy. New employment programs for social assistance recipients are being designed and implemented by Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and other partners: regional colleges, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, NCC, employers and community-based organizations.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

There is local autonomy and flexibility in the design and implementation of the program.

Duration of the Program

STS began in April 1997 and will be implemented over three years.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

The provincial training allowance (PTA) is available for low-income students attending basic education and bridging programs. Students attending skills courses of 4 to 12 weeks can also receive the allowance. The PTA is income tested and provides a flat rate based on family size. Child care amounts are needs tested and provided to a maximum per child. Students receiving the PTA are also provided with supplementary health coverage for themselves and their families.

The provincial youth allowance (PYA) provides the same income support as the PTA for participants of the Youth Futures pilot project in Prince Albert.

Social assistance recipients who participate in work-based programs funded through STS are provided with supplementary health coverage while in the program.

Recipients also continue to receive social assistance benefits if their needs are in excess of their allowance or wages.

The Saskatchewan Child Benefit (SCB), which will be implemented with the National Child Benefit, will provide a monthly benefit for each child to families with income and assets below certain levels. Children of these families will also be entitled to supplementary health coverage.

The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, which will also be implemented at the same time as the National Child Benefit, will provide families with a monthly supplement to employment and child support income. The amount of the supplement will depend on the amount of income and the number of children in the family. As with the SCB, children will receive supplementary health coverage.

Financial Incentives for Employers

Financial incentives for employers to hire social assistance recipients are available through NCC's Community Employment Program:

- Non-government organizations and northern municipalities are eligible for a wage subsidy of up to $5,460 per position to undertake projects that provide on-the-job training and work experience for participants and provide benefits to communities.
- Businesses and commercial cooperatives are eligible for wage subsidies up to $2,730 per position to create a new job in their organization or TO provide work experience for individuals completing training programs.
- Municipalities, regional and urban parks, school boards, health boards, libraries and public training institutions are eligible for a wage subsidy of up to $2,730 per position to provide on-the-job training and work experience.

Financial incentives for employers are also provided through Job Start/Future Skills and the Northern Employer–Employee Developments programs. Although these programs are not dedicated to social assistance recipients, recipients can gain access to them.

Program Funding

NCC receives $11,884,000 to provide career and employment programs and services for social assistance recipients.

Other STS program allocations include the following:

- Job Start/Future Skills, $10,401,260
- basic education and literacy, $13,168,000
- provincial training allowance, $18,629,000
- provincial youth allowance, $1,400,000

Subsidized Child Care

The Child Day Care Division of Saskatchewan administers the Child Day Care Subsidy Program, which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay licensed child care costs. The program, which is based on monthly family income, is available to parents who need child care because they are working or looking for work, attending educational or training programs or have special needs.

Child care costs may also be provided by the Social Assistance Plan to parents who are employed or in training where there is a lack of licensed facilities. Child care costs are assessed as part of overall family needs and paid as part of the social assistance benefit.

The implementation of STS has not resulted in an increase in the number of licensed child care spaces.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

Provincial social assistance recipients are eligible for all programs funded through STS. There are some program-specific criteria. For example, recipients wanting to upgrade their academic skills have to be 18 years of age and may be required to complete some academic testing such as the Canadian Test of Basic Skills.

The employment programs offered through NCC are available only to social assistance recipients.

Caseloads

In 1997–98, employment programs offered through NCC provided 1,500 opportunities for social assistance recipients in subsidized employment and another 1,000 in non-subsidized placements. It is also estimated that approximately 2,400 social assistance recipients will attend basic education and related programming and that approximately 1,000 social assistance recipients will participate in Job Start/Future Skills.

Demographic information is collected on program participants to evaluate participation rates of certain sections of the social assistance populations in particular programs.

Accessibility

STS is moving toward a non-targeted approach to training and employment programming. In 1997–98, the only targeted programming for social assistance recipients was employment-based programming. The department will maintain accessibility through establishing equity group participation rates within programs and developing an accountability framework that ensures those rates are achieved.

Nature of Participation

All STS programming is voluntary with the exception of Youth Futures. The Youth Futures pilot project in Prince Albert requires that all participants become involved in counselling, training or employment-related activities.

The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan requires all employable recipients to develop a plan for independence. Benefits may be withheld from recipients who refuse to pursue opportunities for self-sufficiency.

Orientation and Follow-up

Social assistance recipients who are referred to NCC receive an orientation to the programs and services available either in a group or individually. Recipients work with community program consultants to determine an appropriate career plan and then take the steps necessary to complete that plan.

Recipients placed in programs offered through NCC are monitored by staff while in the program. After completing a program, recipients may return to NCC if further services are required. NCC staff also maintain contact with recipients who enter programs delivered through other agencies, such as basic education programs, to provide any needed support.

Appeals Process

Appeals processes are determined within individual programs and delivery agents. Processes have been established in the public training institutions for students, within the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training for the provincial training and youth allowances, and within the Department of Social Services for social assistance benefits.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training conducted a province-wide consultation process before designing STS. Meetings were held with individuals and organizations involved in or affected by training and labour market services, including business representatives, labour representatives, students, training institutions, community and equity groups, and First Nations and Métis organizations. The department also consulted with the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board and received written briefs from interested parties.

One of the key messages received was that governments, institutions, employers and agencies must work together to meet the training and employment needs of communities.

Programs developed under STS must consider the following economic and social indicators:
- predominant economic activities
- employment trends
- unemployment rates
- social assistance rates

Employment Equity and Displacement

STS promotes equity, fairness and diversity throughout the training and employment system. STS is developing a system-wide approach to equity that will
- work toward representative participation of equity groups
- identify and remove physical, cultural and gender barriers to successful participation
- require inclusive approaches such that programs fit the needs of participants from different groups.

Programs funded through STS do not displace workers, as they encourage new job growth or retrain existing employees.

Community Services

Integration of Community Resources

Community-based organizations are being included within STS to provide a range of services to people with special needs. A review initiated in 1997–98 will determine the role and funding of such organizations in the training system.

Single-Window Access

STS is developing an integrated regional delivery system for training and labour market services that will improve coordination among training institutions, community agencies and federal programs and services. The longer-term goal is to provide a single-window approach to all training, employment and labour market services.

Community Diversity

The STS recognizes the diversity of communities throughout the province and will ensure that programming accommodates diversity through actions such as the following:

- implementing regional delivery systems that can identify local needs
- enhancing partnerships with aboriginal organizations
- supporting the role of community-based organizations in providing services to people with special needs
- implementing new approaches to assist social assistance recipients in gaining the skills they require to become independent
- developing funding, evaluation and accountability mechanisms for achieving the goals of the training strategy.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

STS is committed to

- establishing an accountability framework and measures for assessing progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the training strategy
- implementing processes for evaluation and monitoring for continuous improvement in programs and services.

Work began in 1997–98 to identify expected program and service outcomes and ways to measure and assess them.

An evaluation of Job Start/Future Skills was conducted to determine the program's overall success in providing training and employment, particularly to groups such as social assistance recipients, people with disabilities, aboriginal people and youth. The evaluation demonstrated that the program is serving the needs of employers for skilled workers and resulting in long-term employment for trainees.

Outcome Data

Data are being collected on the following outcomes:

- number of participants who leave social assistance
- number of participants who get jobs
- proportion of participants who leave social assistance
- proportion of participants who get jobs
- extent to which program participants retain the jobs they get
- time required to find a job
- extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare

- nature of jobs obtained by program participants
- level of jobs obtained by program participants
- types of occupations obtained by program participant
- employment earnings

STS will have the capability to track this data, but exactly what data will be tracked has not yet been determined. There will be an electronic interface between the databases for Social Services, NCC and STS. There is an agreement to share information with Human Resources Development Canada.

Use of Findings

Experience thus far with STS has suggested implications for the ongoing and future design of programs. The implications centre on partnerships, sustainable employment, technology and co-location:

- Partnership development, involving many government and non-government agencies, is complex and takes time. Sufficient effort and effective strategies must be used to develop understanding and relationships and to work through common interests and new forms of cooperation.
- Attention must be focused on designing programs and services such that training and work experience result in long-term sustainable employment for social assistance recipients. Approaches such as Job Start/Future Skills that require employers to hire and invest in accredited training for employees with assistance through wage subsidies are more effective than make-work projects or those that require little commitment from employers.
- Information systems to support recipient tracking, evaluation and accountability are often lacking and will require substantial investment to yield data and analysis for program improvement.
- NCC's attempts to co-locate with other services have shown that service coordination and integration for social assistance recipients continues to be difficult to achieve under this model. Co-location appears to be more effective for career services than for other programs or services.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

In February 1998, the Canada–Saskatchewan Agreement on Labour Market Development was signed. The agreement, which took effect on April 1, 1998, gives Saskatchewan responsibility to design and deliver employment programs and services funded through Employment Insurance.

Also in April, the province introduced a new set of employment programs for provincial social assistance recipients. There are three major components:

- **Bridging** provides a flexible range of programs, services and supports to link recipients to employment. Programs can be developed for individuals or groups and may include activities such as assessment, career counselling, job readiness, employability and life skills training, upgrading, literacy, entry-level skills training, work experience, mentoring, job coaching, job development services and employment-related supports.
- **Work Placement** provides assistance in the form of wage subsidies and other employment-related supports to employers to hire eligible employees and provide on-the-job skills training that leads to ongoing employment.
- **Community Works** provides assistance in the form of wage subsidies and other employment-related supports to community-based organizations and municipalities to hire eligible employees for job-creation projects that provide a direct benefit or service to the community and provide participants with on-the-job skills training and work experience.

Contact

NAME:	Wayne McElree
TITLE:	Executive Director, Program Branch
ADDRESS:	Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training 2220 College Avenue Regina, SK S4P 3V7
TELEPHONE:	(306) 787-2093
FAX:	(306) 787-9178
E-MAIL:	wmcelree@sasked.gov.sk.ca

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Index of Acronyms

SCB - Saskatchewan Child Benefit
STS - Saskatchewan Training Strategy
PYA - provincial youth allowance

ALBERTA

Summary

Supports for Independence (SFI) is one of an array of programs and services offered by Family and Social Services (FSS). SFI is designed to provide Albertans who are able to work with the short-term support they need until they become independent of government assistance. The focus is on the promotion of self-sufficiency and family responsibility rather than benefit administration. SFI began in 1990.

FSS and community partners have developed local strategies to maximize work opportunities for recipients. These strategies include a broad range of services such as job information, employment referrals, employment planning, assessment, counselling and orientation workshops on local resources. FSS is also responsible for financial supports including employment-related expenses, child-care supports, moving for confirmed employment, exemptions on earned or self-employed income, the Employment Skills Program, Alberta Community Employment and Alberta Job Corps.

Pre-employment training programs are offered by Advanced Education and Career Development (AECD). AECD, through Career Development Services, works with individuals, private employers and other government departments to increase the skill level of Albertans. Services appropriate for but not limited to welfare recipients include workshops (career planning, job searching, resume writing, etc.), a career information hotline and labour market information centres. AECD is also responsible for education and training, including basic foundation skills and post-secondary education.

Generally, recipients who are able to work are expected to move toward that goal. They are to work, prepare for work or train according to the employment plan they have developed. The government's role is to provide the support and the active measures recipients need to be successful. Recipients who refuse to look for or prepare for employment may lose their welfare benefits. Recipients are informed of their right to appeal; an appeals process has been established. Recipients not expected to work include those who are caring for a dependent child under six months of age or for a disabled family member, those who have been assessed as having unusual difficulty coping with the competing demands of family and work and those who have recently left an abusive situation and have been assessed as requiring a period of adjustment. Single recipients who are 50 or older with no dependents and who are assessed as unable or unlikely to obtain continuous employment for more than 20 hours a week are assigned to transitional support.

Participants are categorized in terms of their relationship to the labour market. SFI has four basic categories: supplement to earnings (employed recipients who are unable to meet their basic needs), employment and training support (unemployed recipients who must look for work or engage in training), transitional support (recipients who are temporarily unable to work) and assured support (recipients who are not able to work continuously in the normal labour force). SFI is delivered by a team of intake workers, financial benefits workers and employment and client support services workers.

The program is highly flexible in terms of local needs, design and implementation. Sub-programs must be designed to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy. Youth are targeted by some programs. SFI does not discriminate by gender.

AECD and FSS jointly fund public and private agencies offering employment preparation. The FSS welfare budget for 1996–97 was $487,175,000. The FSS employment and training budget was $48,798,000. The AECD budget for 1996–97 was 115,041,000. The welfare caseload in March 1996 was 48,773.

One-on-one orientation is provided to participants, and follow-up is consistent with the needs and circumstances of the individual. Evaluations are ongoing and are used to make resource allocation decisions, improve programs and services and improve accountability.

The province has recently completed work toward a new model of adult skills development, which it expects to begin piloting in 1998–99. In addition, AECD and FSS have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will result in an expansion of the range of programs and services in response to the changing needs of recipients.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Program

Supports for Independence (SFI)

Description

SFI is one of an array of programs and services offered by Family and Social Services (FSS). FSS offers income support and work experience programs. Pre-employment training programs are offered by Advanced Education and Career Development (AECD).

SFI is designed to provide Albertans who are able to work with the short-term support they need until they become independent of government assistance. The focus is on the promotion of self-sufficiency and family responsibility rather than benefit administration. Thus, it marks a change from a passive welfare system to an active employment initiative.

Alberta's welfare program is delivered by a team of intake workers, financial benefits workers and employment and client support services workers.

Goals

SFI has the following goals:

- to assist recipients to achieve independence and self-sufficiency to the greatest extent possible
- to refer potential participants to alternative resources to meet their basic needs
- to determine eligibility and provide the appropriate level of financial and other benefits to meet needs

Objectives

The guiding principles of SFI are as follows:

- SFI is a program of last resort that meets the basic needs of eligible applicants and recipients. It includes assisting recipients to gain access to family support as an alternative to SFI.
- SFI is a temporary resource, acting as a bridge to assist recipients to maximum independence.
- People are better off working than not working.
- Where recipients are not able to become fully independent, SFI provides assured financial support based on need and eligibility.

Program Rationale

In 1992, the Minister of Alberta Family and Social Services set out to reform the entire welfare system based on a three-part philosophy:

- People want to work.
- Any job is a good job.
- People on welfare should not be better off than other Albertans.

The welfare reform initiative was announced in April 1993. The basic strategies were

- to create new, more effective employment and training opportunities for recipients
- to transfer welfare-supported students to the Students Finance Board (support would now come in the form of grants for academic upgrading, English as a second language and basic education
- to restructure welfare benefits and reduce costs

Welfare eligibility conditions were changed to reinforce the principle that welfare was now a program of last resort and not a choice of lifestyle. These changes included a requirement that parents with children older than six months must actively seek work or enter training to prepare for independence. (Previously, parents of children over two years were expected to work; before that, FSS expected parents to return to work when the child was six or of school age.) Rules for common-law spouses and sponsored immigrants were also tightened.

Within a few months, the department, in collaboration with AECD, had a number of work experience and training programs in full operation. Alberta Community Employment, Employment Skills Program and Alberta Job Corps give welfare recipients the opportunity to learn skills and gain valuable work experience while getting paid. For training, education and pre-employment programs, recipients are referred to AECD. Close collaboration between FSS and AECD, and by extension with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), is a key element of SFI.

In 1994, an agreement was signed by FSS, AECD and HRDC to pilot the integration of labour market and income support programs and services in four sites in Alberta. The objective was to increase recipients' accessibility by providing a single-window access point to programs and services. In 1996, the new Minister of FSS pledged to continue the reform of Alberta's social allowance program and to maintain the department's focus on employment and job training for recipients able to work.

The latest development has been the Canada–Alberta Labour Market Development agreement, signed December 6, 1996. This agreement between AECD and HRDC enabled Alberta to assume an expanded role in the design and delivery of labour market development programs and services for the unemployed in the province, effective April 1, 1997. Under the agreement, AECD delivers, through a network of Canada–Alberta Service Centres, active employment measures that will help unemployed Albertans get back to work. These measures are funded through Employment Insurance. During the first three years of the agreement (1997–2000), the government of Canada will contribute up to $317 million from the EI account to the Alberta government.

AECD is responsible for ensuring that Albertans have access to needs assessment, employment counselling and job-finding services. With flexibility to meet Alberta's labour market needs, AECD designs and delivers provincial programs and services similar to the active employment benefits described in Part II of the Employment Insurance Act. These include work experience, assisted job placement, funding for training and assistance toward self-employment. HRDC continues to be responsible for providing income support and labour market services that are national in scope such as national labour market information. It also continues to play a key role in interprovincial mobility.

History

In 1990, in response to a steadily rising welfare caseload, the Alberta government announced major changes to its social allowance program. The new program, SFI, was designed to provide Albertans with the short-term support they needed until they could become self-sufficient.

Benefits were streamlined and the criteria for categorizing recipients were changed based on a recipient's relationship to the labour market. For example, is the recipient working? temporarily unable to work? disabled to the point where he or she cannot work? Four new sub-programs were established, and staff positions were created to assist in the assessing recipients and helping them gain access to training and employment opportunities. However, the caseload continued to rise at an alarming rate, and it was determined that more radical changes were needed.

The FSS welfare reform initiative, described above, was the response.

Program Activities

Main Activity

The main activity is to assist recipients in maximizing their efforts to gain employment and financial independence.

Specific Activities

The following activities are part of Alberta's approach:

- adult basic education/literacy training
- second language training
- life skills training

- parenting classes
- counselling on
  - job stress
  - family stress
  - family violence. Referral is made to a community agency.
  - the stress of balancing employment and family conflicts. The employment assessment, done before a referral to any employment program, should begin to address this issue. Life management is part of many programs that include balancing family responsibilities and getting structure or routine into the lives of participants, as appropriate. If a participant is not ready for work immediately, an employment preparation program is considered.
  - the stress of balancing school and family conflicts. Counselling is available through the educational institution in which the participant is enrolled.
  - substance abuse. Referral is made to a community agency.
- high-school completion
- post-secondary education
  - university
  - college
  - apprenticeship/trades
- job-readiness training
  - counselling
  - job-search training
  - career planning
  - job referrals
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience
- self-employment. Economic Development and Tourism offers assistance in developing a feasible business plan.
- volunteer activities. Voluntarism is encouraged if the individual is unable to participate in the competitive labour market. Although not formally part of the Alberta employment programs, a volunteer activity might be part of an employment plan developed by the participant and the employment and client support worker.
- employability assessment
- job placement

Generally, recipients who are able to work are expected to move toward that goal. They are to work, prepare for work or train according to the employment plan they have developed. The government's role is to provide the support and the active measures recipients need to be successful.

AECD, through Career Development Services, works with individuals, private employers and other government departments to increase the skill level of Albertans. Services appropriate for but not limited to welfare recipients include

- workshops. Group sessions assist adult Albertans wanting to develop their employment skills. Individual career counselling may be offered.
- career information hotline. A toll-free telephone service provides information and referrals related to career planning, educational opportunities and job search strategies.
- labour market information centres. Information is available on career planning, occupational options, educational opportunities, employment and job-search strategies, apprenticeship and trades, entrepreneurship and business development, and human resource planning.

FSS and community partners have developed local strategies to maximize work opportunities for recipients. These strategies include a broad range of services such as:

- job information. Job boards and automated job information centres provide up-to-date information on local job opportunities.
- employment referrals. Recipients are referred to job vacancies identified through local partnerships.
- employment planning. Assessment, counselling and planning services are provided by the FSS delivery team.
- orientation workshops. Group sessions provide recipients with information on local resources and assistance with employment planning.

Employment programs provided by FSS along with related programs offered through other departments are coordinated under the welfare reform plan. The goal is seamless delivery of employment, work experience and job training programs.

Integrated Training Centres for Youth (ITCY) – a Canada/Alberta Strategic Initiative – is a pilot project designed to test the value of customized counselling, training and worksite interventions for young individuals at risk of long-term dependence on public support. ITCYs in Lethbridge, Red Deer and Edmonton target youth aged 16 to 20 who have dropped out of school and are at risk of long-term dependence on social allowance.

The emphasis is on integrating practical job skills with life management skills. Ongoing coaching is tailored and sequenced to the individual needs of each participant. All occupational training is competency based, ensuring that participants master the skills necessary to work in their chosen industry. Depending on the agency, ITCY participants may receive training in-house or at an employer's job site. Participants typically get into site training through job shadowing, work experience or training-on-the-job opportunities. Participants may also gain access to supplemental occupational training from other institutions or through other programs.

With some exceptions, participants are considered to have completed training when they have achieved all the competencies in their training plan. The ITCYs try to arrange job-site training with employers who will be in a position to hire participants after they have completed training. Recipients may receive a training allowance until their entire wage is paid by the employer or until they reach the total sum available to them ($4,500). The role of employers varies by site but typically involves training, identifying core competencies, developing training plans, speaking at ITCYs, mentoring, networking with other employers and sitting on an advisory committee.

Funding is $3.74 million over three years (1995–98) shared 50-50 between the federal and provincial governments. About 440 youth have taken part in this program. The mean age of participants is 18. Most are single males; about 12% are a visible minority and 13% are aboriginal.

Canada–Alberta Service Centres (CASC) were established to offer Albertans convenient access to an integrated array programs and services. CASCs provide federal and Alberta government services and financial support to help people acquire employment skills and enter or re-enter the labour market.

Training and Educational Activities

Recipients work with an employment and client support worker to develop an employment assessment and employability plan. The plan, which directs the activities of both the recipient and the support worker, includes the short-term and long-term goals of the recipient, specific activities with timeframes, expectations of the recipient, responsibilities specific to the recipient's category (i.e., relationship to the labour market) and a description of how the recipient will report on her or his progress.

The primary responsibility for the transfer of the SFI recipient to funding under the Students Finance Board lies with the client support worker, who assesses whether the needs of the recipient are appropriate for this funding. Financial benefits workers are the initial contact for recipients who want to return to school to prepare themselves for a job. Intake workers explore alternate resources with applicants who are interested in training. Recipients requesting full-time attendance in basic foundation skills must have the training approved by FSS.

Training and educational opportunities include the following:

- basic foundation skills. Students enrolled in basic foundation skills programs receive grant funding under the Skills Development Program administered by AECD. Basic foundation skills include academic upgrading, literacy and English as a second language.

- post-secondary education. Students are expected to assume greater responsibility for the costs of education as employability and income earning potential increases. Loans, which may be supplemented by grants, are available from the Students Finance Board for post-secondary study such as skill training programs, training at technical institutes, and college and university programs. For people who would like to improve their skills but are working or unable to study full-time, a part-time bursary or loan program is available. Maintenance grants up to $6,000 per academic year are available for disadvantaged individuals, primarily single parents.
- Enhanced Employment Alternatives and Training-on-the-Job Program. These programs, developed specifically for welfare reform, include education components. The Skills Development Program, through grants, assists recipients to reach a basic level of education (grade 12) or equivalent. They can then pursue further training and education through the Students Finance Board like other Albertans.

Employment-Based Activities

Throughout the province, FSS and AECD jointly contract with public and private agencies offering employment preparation services for welfare recipients. The services provided are determined locally after examining the needs of recipients and the resources available in the community. AECD manages the services, which include the following:

- ***Employment Alternatives Program (EAP)*** EAP is a labour-market driven employment preparation program designed to help welfare recipients to re-enter the work force as quickly as possible. It also helps Albertans at risk to avoid dependency on social assistance and long-term unemployment and maintains a skilled and productive work force that contributes to the province's economic and social development. The program contracts with private and public agencies to provide Albertans with practical, job-related training: life management skills, job-specific skill training, upgrading, on-the-job training and work experience. Job-search and placement services are also available. FSS has provided additional dollars each year for Enhanced EAP to extend EAP services to a greater number of welfare recipients. For 1995-96, $3.5M was provided to serve an additional 3,882 welfare recipients.

- ***Job Placement Program*** In addition to matching job seekers with vacancies, private and public agencies provide Albertans on social assistance with services that enable them to increase their resume-writing, interviewing and job-searching skills.

- ***Training-on-the-Job Program*** Participating employers are assisted in developing training plans and covering the costs of providing recipients with job-specific skill training at the worksite. Training focuses on transferable skills, hands-on work experience and opportunities for continued employment in jobs for which there is a labour-market demand. Participants are paid wages by their employers. In turn, employers are reimbursed by the department at a flat weekly rate.

- ***Integrated Training Program*** Selected contractors provide welfare recipients with skill training in high-demand occupations along with any upgrading, life skills and work experience needed to move into a job.

- ***Work experience*** FSS temporary employment programs provide work experience opportunities to recipients who are able to work but have been unsuccessful in their job search. The positions are six months in duration, and participants are paid wages plus benefits. Participants develop work-related skills and obtain a recent work record. Eligible employees must be at least 18 years of age and have the minimum educational requirement necessary for recruitment into an occupation related to the work experience. FSS currently manages and delivers three temporary employment programs:
  - Employment Skills Program. Employers are provincial government departments. Employees are paid $6 per hour plus benefits and can have individualized training of up to $1,000.
  - Alberta Community Employment (ACE). Municipalities, publicly funded organizations and non-profit agencies sponsor positions in the community. ACE contributes $6 per hour for each ACE employee. Employees receive a minimum of $5 per hour plus benefits. Employers are encouraged to top-up wages. The employer may apply for $1,000 to defray training costs if the ACE employee was retained for six months beyond the completion of the ACE project.
  - Alberta Job Corps (AJC). Skill development through work experience is the essence of AJC. It offers participants up to 26 weeks of employment services geared specifically toward labour-market trends, the needs of local business and recipient skill levels. In addition to paid work experience, services may include employment counselling, the chance to experience different types of jobs, life management skills development, basic skill development in a variety of areas (e.g., home and auto repair and maintenance, personal finances, cooking, clerical skills), the opportunity for certification (e.g., CPR, first aid), employment skills development, job-search techniques, job placement assistance and follow-up support. Partners include local businesses and community groups. The program includes measures to build strong links with local employers to help participants gain employment experience and find jobs.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design and Implementation

FSS designed, implements and administers SFI. AECD and FSS together designed, implement and administer the array of programs and services used to support recipient independence.

FSS local services are responsible for information, employment referrals, employment planning, assessment, counselling and orientation workshops. FSS is also responsible for financial supports including employment-related expenses, child-care supports, moving for confirmed employment, exemptions on earned or self-employed income, the Employment Skills Program, Alberta Community Employment and Alberta Job Corps.

AECD is responsible for workshops (career planning, job searching, resume writing, etc.), the career information hotline and the labour market information centres. AECD is also responsible for education and training, including basic foundation skills and post-secondary education.

AECD and FSS jointly fund public and private agencies offering employment preparation.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

The model is seen by provincial officials as very flexible. There is local discretion in who will be contracted to deliver training or job placement services. There is flexibility in developing employment plans with participants in SFI.

There is local flexibility in the design and ongoing administration of the program and service array. AECD and FSS base programs and services on factors such as recipient needs, available community resources and employers, program and service gaps and labour-market demand. Mangers are given flexibility to develop options that work in their communities.

Duration of the Program

SFI began in 1990. Other welfare reforms began in 1992 and have been evolving since.

For many of the interventions, there is a maximum time a participant can remain in any one component. For example, a participant can remain in the Employment Skills Program, Alberta Community Employment or Alberta Job Corps for six months. Generally, participants are expected to have one placement and then move to employment. The expectation is that participants will move forward to the best of their ability. The emphasis is on engaging recipients, motivating them and using whatever works to move them toward independence.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

The following are provided under SFI:

- wage supplements
- compensation for job-related expenses. A benefit of up to $300 per year is available for employment-related expenses, including expenses for work clothing, work tools, grooming, meals and transportation (such as bus pass, mileage, vehicle repairs, maintenance and insurance). The recipient must be actively seeking employment according to his or her employment plan or starting confirmed employment or starting or participating in an employment preparation program.
- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction. A combined net employment income of the recipient and all adults in the family unit of $115 per month is exempt, plus 25% of any amount over $115. Self-employed recipients are able to offset some of their income with business-related expenses.
- compensation for child-care expenses
- transportation subsidies (as above)
- housing subsidies. The Social Allowance Regulation allows for a shelter allowance. Applicants or recipients and their families are eligible for the actual cost of shelter to the maximum specified in the Regulations. There is also some public housing available for low-income families.
- moving expenses. An allowance to assist with a move within Alberta may be provided for an applicant or recipient and members of the family if the move is essential to take up full-time or part-time confirmed employment. Recipients must use the most economical and reasonable means of moving.
- supplemental health care. Basic necessities covered include essential surgical, medical, optical, dental and other remedial treatment, care and attention. The Social Allowance Regulation defines health benefits as prescribed drugs, funeral services and optical, dental, ambulance and other medical benefits approved by the Director and provided to recipients and their families pursuant to medical services cards issued by the department.
- dental care (as above)

Deadlines and Subsidies

Recipients who refuse to look for or prepare for employment may lose their welfare benefits. Recipients are informed of their right to appeal. The expectation is that participants will move forward to the best of their capability. Barriers are dealt with through a referral or other appropriate intervention. Written notice is not required for recipients to be denied a benefit or terminated from the program; however, workers or offices may choose to give notice. A recipient may have additional sources of income and still remain in the program.

Financial Incentives for Employers

In the Employment Skills Program, FSS pays up to $1,000 for additional training costs based on the employee's assessed need. In Alberta Community Employment, the employer may apply for $1,000 to defray training costs if the ACE employee was retained for six months beyond the completion of the project. In the temporary employment programs, FSS pays $5 to $6 per hour for each employee, plus the employer's contribution to employment insurance, the Canada Pension Plan and statutory holiday and vacation pay.

Program Funding

Because welfare reform was initiated before the implementation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), the CHST was not a factor in promoting change in Alberta. It is seen only as a source of revenue. Provincial officials look for solutions that will work for Alberta and then determine funding sources.

The FSS welfare budget for 1996–97 was $487,175,000. The FSS employment and training budget was $48,798,000.

The AECD budget allocations for 1996–97 were as follows:

- Employment Alternatives Program, $10,291,000
- Skills Improvement Program (SIP), $1,150,000
- Integrated Training, $1,800,000
- Job Placement, $1,400,000
- Training on the Job, $1,000,000
- Skills Development Program, $99,400,000 ($61,600,000 transferred from FSS to AECD)

Alberta is spending less on these programs because of the significant reductions in the number of people in SFI.

Subsidized Child Care

The day-care subsidy helps lower-income parents with the payment of their child care fees when their child attends a day-care centre or a family day home. The following factors are considered in determining whether a family qualifies for the subsidy:

- reason for child care (parent is working, seeking work or a student, or the child or parent has special needs)
- child-care attendance of at least 50 hours per month
- net family income

About 45% of children attending family day homes and day-care centres are subsidized.

For SFI participants with preschoolers, child care is covered. The day-care subsidy pays the major part, and the portion that would otherwise be paid by the parent is covered by SFI. If licensed day care is not available, FSS pays babysitting costs. This coverage would be indicated in the employment plan. There is a surplus of child-care spaces in Alberta.

Single parents of a five-month-old baby are notified that they need to think about preparing for work. When the child is six months old, a worker meets with the mother to do an employability assessment and begin to formulate an employment plan. The first step might be an orientation session to look at the different options leading to greater self-sufficiency. It is possible for a parent to lose welfare benefits because she or he refuses to try to move toward the work force. The Employment Skills Program and return to education are popular choices for single mothers.

The Parentage and Maintenance Act allows agreements to be entered into or an application to be made for an order declaring a person to be a parent and ordering maintenance of the child. FSS has a Maintenance Program to assist families in receipt of social allowance to establish the paternity of children born out of wedlock and to obtain appropriate child maintenance orders and agreements for unmarried, separated or divorced Albertans. The welfare recipient's right to maintenance is assumed by the government during the time that person receives welfare benefits.

One of the government's performance measures is the proportion of single-parent welfare cases with child maintenance orders or agreements, defined as the percentage of single-parent recipients for whom maintenance is received from the non-custodial parent. This figure measures the recipient's access to alternative sources of financial support and the commitment of non-custodial parents to pay support for their children.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

SFI is a program of last resort that actively promotes self-reliance through employment and family responsibility. For people not expected to work, financial benefits are provided to cover basic necessities. For people expected to work, temporary assistance is provided, with the emphasis being on independence through employment or training.

During the intake interview, the expectation of the recipient moving toward self-sufficiency is made clear. An employment history is taken and a preliminary employment plan is developed.

Participants are categorized in terms of their relationship to the labour market. SFI has four basic categories:

- Supplement to earnings. Recipients in this category are working full-time or part-time but are unable to meet their basic needs. Recipients are expected to look for ways to increase their earnings by increasing their hours of work, seeking higher pay or obtaining different work. They are expected to keep their current job while trying to achieve these ends.
- Employment and training support. Recipients are unemployed and are expected to look for employment or engage in training activities. People who refuse to participate in these activities may be disqualified from further benefits.
- Transitional support. Recipients in this stage are temporarily unable to work because of circumstances such as illness or health issues. They are not expected to seek employment while in this category but will be placed in another category when their circumstances change.
- Assured support. These recipients have been assessed as not being able to work continuously in the normal labour force. Most of these cases have mitigating factors. While any one factor may not in itself create a barrier to employment, a combination of these factors may form the basis for assured support:
  - medical impairment
  - lack of formal education (grade 8 or less)
  - poor social skills
  - poor work history
  - age (60 and over)
  - history of unsuccessful interventions
  - other social factors such as family situation or extensive criminal record

Alberta has a separate program for adults with severe and permanent disabilities: Assured Income for the Severely Disabled (AISH). Since 1993, the AISH caseload has risen from 15,000 to 20,000.

Recipients not expected to work include those who are caring for a dependent child under six months of age or for a disabled family member, those who have been assessed as having unusual difficulty coping with the competing demands of family and work and those who have recently left an abusive situation and have been assessed as requiring a period of adjustment. Single recipients who are 50 or older with no dependents and who are assessed as unable or unlikely to obtain continuous employment for more than 20 hours a week are assigned to transitional support.

Caseloads

The Alberta welfare caseload in March 1996 was 48,773. Of these, 37,613 were expected to work:
- supplement to earnings, 10,337
- employment and training, 19,779
- transitional support, 7,497

The remainder (11,160) were in the assured support category.

The welfare caseload reached an all-time high of 98,642 in December 1992. From March 1993 to the end of August 1996, the caseload declined 51.9%, from 94,087 to 45,242. The caseload for recipients expected to work decreased 57.2% (48,535 cases) in that same period.

The estimated number of SFI participants in program components for 1996–97 was:
- Employment Alternatives Program, 10,000
- Skills Improvement Program, 450
- Integrated Training, 746
- Job Placement, 3,200
- Alberta Community Employment, 2,500
- Employment Skills Program, 500
- Alberta Job Corps, 1,200
- Training on the Job, 450
- Student Assistance, 11,000

The following types of information are gathered about participants:
- demographics
- education and training history
- employment history
- medical-social history, as appropriate
- child-care needs and use, as appropriate
- length of time in receipt of social assistance

Accessibility

The program has been able to serve all of those who have chosen to participate or who are required to participate. There were waiting lists initially, but programs are currently undersubscribed because of the large reduction in the caseload.

Nature of Participation

Participation is expected for those categorized as able to work except for mothers of children under six months or a disabled child requiring full time care. For those expected to work, temporary assistance is provided with the primary emphasis being on independence through employment or training. Recipients not expected to work are described in Section F. SFI is based on the premise that recipients want to work and become independent. If a recipient demonstrates little or no effort to become independent, the worker reviews the impact this lack of effort has on a participant's eligibility. Benefits are denied when expectations about becoming independent have not been met.

Orientation and Follow-up

The success of employment programs is the responsibility of all SFI staff. Each team member has a role in

- informing recipients of their responsibility to participate in the employment programs process to gain independence
- assisting and providing the necessary support to recipients to reach independence
- consulting with other team members to keep one another informed about recipients' progress and to review resource information

An employability assessment is done for all participants to develop a profile of the person and to determine the person's readiness to get and keep employment. The assessment identifies the areas that must be addressed to enhance the person's potential to become self-sufficient. It looks at individual circumstances, strengths, obstacles, interests, abilities and potential. The four main assessment factors are vocation, health, life management and accessibility, each with sub-factors that are rated as strengths, obstacles or not applicable. Once all the factors have been rated, the significant strengths and the significant obstacles are summarized.

With input from the recipient, the client support worker then determines if further employment programs are required. If so, an employment plan is developed to establish the recipient's commitment to employment or training, to focus the recipient's and department's attention on increasing recipient independence and to inform the recipient of the consequences of not following through on the plan. The recipient participates in the plan by identifying specific activities he or she will take to become independent and the timeframes to achieve each step.

All recipients placed in employment, employment preparation programs or training are followed up to ensure that there is stability in the placement. The frequency and nature of the follow-up are consistent with the needs and circumstances of the recipient. Recipients complete a monthly reporting card on which they can indicate their needs or concerns to their support worker. They can also telephone the worker at any time; the expectation is that calls will be returned within 24 hours.

Appeals Process

An appeal process has been established for all social assistance applicants and recipients under SFI.

At intake, the intake worker informs applicants about their right to appeal, the appeal process and the time limit for the appeal. Although appeal panels do not have the authority to contravene the Act or Regulations, recipients cannot be refused the right to have all decisions heard by a citizens' appeal panel if they choose.

The steps in the appeal process are as follows:

- An appeal form is completed.
- The supervisor reviews the decision.
- If there is no resolution from step 2, the appeal may go to a citizens' appeal committee, whose members are appointed by the Minister.

The committee decision is binding. It can be changed only by court order or if there is new information.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

Programs and services are available province-wide. The following provincial economic conditions were taken into account in designing the approaches:

- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities
- employment trends. Assessments were conducted to ensure that future local employment requirements were part of the program design and implementation. If the future employment requirements are linked to high educational qualifications, the expectation is that the person will get the higher education through the Students Finance Board, not through SFI.

- unemployment rates. If there are no jobs in one area, geographic mobility is encouraged and supported, particularly for single employables.
- social assistance rates

Programs were designed to ensure that the local job openings and skills requirements matched the skills that participants had or would develop during the program. Recipient characteristics were also taken into account when designing programs.

Employment Equity and Displacement

The program design does not discriminate by gender, although it may take into account the fact that women and men tend to predominate in different jobs in the local economy.

If single parents pursue post-secondary education, they are eligible for maintenance grants of up to $6,000 per academic year in addition to Canadian and provincial student loans.

Programs were designed to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy. Positions must not eliminate, amend or otherwise affect the security or hours of work of any person employed in an existing position by a sponsoring department (Employment Skills Program), the employer (Alberta Community Employment) or the community (Alberta Job Corps).

Community Services

Integration of Community Resources

A variety of community resources is available to meet the special needs of some groups of participants. Resources include associations for the mentally challenged, residential services, Catholic Social Services, women's shelters and group homes. The worker refers the applicant or recipient to the appropriate resource to help that person become more employable.

Single-Window Access

The 1994 agreement signed by FSS, AECD and HRDC was designed to pilot the integration of labour-market and income-support programs and services in Alberta. The objective was to increase recipient accessibility by providing a single-window access point to programs and services. It was an expansion of the co-location concept pioneered by the Athabasca District Office in the late 1980s. The result has been the successful implementation of Canada–Alberta Service Centres (CASCs) in those sites. The CASCs bring together under one roof a range of training, employment and income-related services of the federal and provincial governments.

In general, the client support worker coordinates activities through the development and monitoring of the employment plans. FSS and AECD work together closely to share information.

Community Diversity
Demographics such as the age, sex, family composition and family size of recipients were taken into account when designing programs.

Alberta's employment programs and services were designed to take a holistic approach to the welfare-to-work transition by providing a comprehensive range of services that can be tapped to meet the needs of almost any recipient. The employment plan enables a tailor-made application of the model to the participant. The client support worker - who develops the employment plan with the participant and who has knowledge of a large menu of services - is key in ensuring that the program is flexible enough to meet the needs of people of different backgrounds.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan
FSS monitors, tracks and reports on participation in individual programs. Success rates are measured by the percentage of individuals exiting the welfare system, the percentage of individuals getting a top-up or supplement, recipients' average earnings and other means.

AECD does formative and summary evaluations of each of the major strategies and programs. FSS program evaluation is somewhat ad hoc, but AECD prepares an annual evaluation plan and puts resources toward ongoing, cumulative evaluation. Recipient progress is reported 3, 6 and 12 months after completing a program.

Canada West Foundation has been contracted by FSS to do a pre-survey and post-survey to find out what happens to recipients who leave SFI.

Cost-Benefit Research
Cost-benefit research is part of program evaluation. AECD evaluations examine costs and benefits from a government perspective - the costs of the AECD-managed programs and the savings as a result of the programs - and from the participant's perspective - employment earnings gains. From a government perspective, cost-benefit analyses have shown positive results.

Both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits are measured. Monetary costs and benefits include savings, program costs or payments, social assistance payments and personal taxes. Non-monetary costs and benefits include satisfaction, child care, self-esteem and skill development.

For 1995–96, 70% of recipients no longer depended on welfare one year after participating in an FSS or AECD employment or training initiative. An additional 10% were employed and receiving an earnings supplement averaging $568 per month.

Outcome Data

Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance (FSS/AECD)
- the number of participants who get jobs (AECD)
- the proportion of participants who leave social assistance (FSS)
- the proportion of participants who get jobs (AECD)
- the extent to which program participants retain the jobs they get (AECD)
- the time required to find a job (AECD)
- the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare (FSS/AECD)
- the nature of jobs obtained by program participants, i.e., full-time, part-time, short-term (AECD)
- the level of jobs obtained by program participants (AECD)
  - entry level jobs - AECD
  - pay levels - AECD
- the types of occupations obtained by program participants (AECD)
- employment earnings (AECD)
- family income if on SFI (FSS)

FSS tracks how long a file stays closed (up to 12 months) after a recipient participates in an employment program. AECD tracks people for up to 12 months after they leave an AECD program. FSS stops tracking people once they are no longer on SFI, although it continues to track those who receive supplements to earnings.

Participant Evaluation

A participant's continued interest in the program is evaluated through her or his attitude. If the participant's attitude appears to be very negative (e.g., if there is violence or a drug or alcohol problem), a referral may be made (e.g., to an anger management workshop or a drug and alcohol program) to reduce the barriers to independence. A decision can be made to remove the participant from the program on the basis of the attitude evaluation.

A participant's continued performance in the program is also evaluated; again, a decision can be made to remove the participant from the program based on performance. The provincial worker or the contracted agency documents the person's performance (and, possibly, attitude) in monthly reports.

Data are not collected to track changes in job readiness, as there are measurement difficulties in tracking these types of changes, nor is information collected on other aspects of family well-being.

Regularly, through surveys, the participants' level of satisfaction with AECD programs is assessed. Eighty per cent of participants state that they are satisfied with the programs.

Program evaluation tracks which types of programs are most suitable to specific groups of participants; e.g., single parents do well in Employment Skills Program and in ongoing education.

Use of Findings

AECD evaluations are used to

- assist in making resource allocation decisions
- assist in finding ways to improve the performance of programs and services
- provide better accountability for the results of programs and services

Evaluation results are fed into the program development side of the departments and are sometimes used to discontinue, expand or initiate a program. Operational difficulties are addressed by a management response.

Other Issues

Several recommendations have been made as a result of evaluations to date:

- Contract management needs to become more accountable for results.
- Better assessment of recipients before referral is necessary.
- Recipient monitoring must be improved, perhaps through the promotion of case management techniques.
- Success measures need to be revisited and standards made more realistic.
- Recipient follow-up needs to be improved and should be strictly heeded, as per contract obligations.
- Training should be more job specific.

Process evaluations have highlighted recurring issues such as

- inappropriate referrals
- the importance of contractor experience
- contractors' compensation
- the need for clearer understanding of program goals and objectives
- systems of reporting, monitoring and follow up

The huge reductions in caseload indicate that the more employable recipients have left the system. The remaining recipients are more challenging. The province may need to devise different strategies or change the emphasis of existing strategies.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

The province has recently completed work toward a new model of adult skills development, which it expects to begin piloting in 1998-99. Key aspects of **Adult Skills Alberta** are

- better assessment
- a stronger focus on occupational skills, employability (personal) skills, work experience and job placement
- new credentials for occupations that do not require grade 12 completion
- stronger accountability on the part of training providers

AECD and FSS have recently signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** that sets the direction of AECD's Learner Assistance Division and FSS's income and employment programs. The MOU will result in an expansion of the range of programs and services in response to the changing needs of recipients.

The signing of the **Labour Market Development Agreement** has given the province more control over the design and delivery of labour market programs in Alberta. This has provided the province with the opportunity to simplify labour-market programs and to identify and respond to gaps in programming. The province is undertaking a review to achieve the goal of program rationalization.

Recently, three studies have been published that speak to and evaluate the **impact of Alberta's welfare-to-work initiatives**:

- K. Boessenkool, CD Howe Institute: "Back to Work: Learning from the Alberta Welfare Experiment", published spring 1997. The report indicates that Alberta appears to have been successful in getting potential and existing welfare recipients into work and taking advantage of an expanding labour market.
- Canada West Foundation (study commissioned by FSS): "Where are they now? Assessing the Impact of Welfare Reforms on Former Recipients, 1993-1996", published summer 1997. The report indicates that most former welfare recipients have found jobs and improved their lives; however, many former recipients continue to struggle at low incomes.

- R. Shillington, Population Research Laboratory, University of Alberta: "Social Assistance and Paid Employment in Alberta, 1993-1996", released spring 1998. This report confirms the findings of the Canada West Foundation study, indicating that most former welfare recipients have been reintegrated into the labour market, but often into low-paying jobs with few benefits.

Contacts

NAME:	Barbara Winship
TITLE:	Director, Employment and Training Initiatives Income and Employment Programs
ADDRESS:	Alberta Family and Social Services 14th Floor, Seventh Street Plaza 10030 107 Street Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4
E-MAIL:	winshba@censsw.gov.ab.ca
TELEPHONE:	(403) 422-6781
FAX:	(403) 422-6768

NAME:	Yvonne McFadzen
TITLE:	Senior Director Policy and Research Learner Assistance Division
ADDRESS:	Advanced Education and Career Development 8th Floor, Commerce Place 10155 102 Street Edmonton, AB T5J 4L5
E-MAIL:	yvonne.mcfadzen@aecd.gov.ab.ca
TELEPHONE:	(403) 427-9644
FAX:	(403) 422-1297

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  - Temporary Employment Programs and Employment Preparation Initiatives
  - Schooling Initiatives
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- K. Boessenkool, CD Howe Institute, "Back to Work: Learning from the Alberta Welfare Experiment", 1997
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Index of Acronyms

AECD - Advanced Education and Career Development
AISH - Assured Income for the Severely Disabled
AJC - Alberta Job Corps
CASC - Canada-Alberta Service Centres
CHST - Canada Health and Social Transfer
EAP - Employment Alternatives Program
FSS - Family and Support Services
HRDC - Human Resources Development Canada
ITCY - Integrated Training Centres for Youth
MOU - Memorandum of Understanding
SFI - Supports for Independence
SIP - Skills Improvement Program

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Summary

Youth Works (YW) and Welfare to Work (WW) are components of BC Benefits, which represents a major renewal of British Columbia's social safety net and includes specific initiatives that will replace most of the existing welfare system. The programs are under the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) and the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR). Both programs began in January 1996.

YW provides youth aged 19 to 24 with a living allowance and programs and services to enable them to move into employment. It is available to youth whose income and assets are too low for self-support. To be eligible to receive the living allowance, the youth must participate in a range of employability programs, including Independent Job Search, Assisted Job Search and longer-term employability and training programs. YW operates under the BC Benefits (Youth Works) Act, which came into force March 31, 1997.

WW offers employment-related programming, including Independent Job Search, Assisted Job Search and longer-term employability and training programs, to adults 25 years of age and over on income assistance. The programs are established and eligibility for participants is determined under the BC Benefits (Income Assistance) Act of March 31, 1997.

Training and education programs are provided by colleges, employers, private training centres, local contractors, program providers and community-based organizations. Youth have priority for employability programming. If spaces are still available, then adults may also choose employability programs. Employment-based activities include the involvement of private, public and non-profit employers.

Participants are eligible for an increasing range of services as their time on assistance and need for intervention increases. Recipients move through the system in phases as needed. The phases are the Independent Job Search (maximum seven months), the Assisted Job Search (maximum two months) and Employability Skills (no set timeframe). During all phases, participants must demonstrate that they are making reasonable efforts to secure employment or their benefits may be discontinued. For YW participants, demonstration means participation at all required meetings, sessions and activities and an active, ongoing job search. For WW participants, demonstration means an active, ongoing job search and participation in other programs subject to availability and MAETT approval. No appeals process has been established.

Programs are optional for recipients who have a disability, who are over age 60, who are single parents with children under seven or who are single parents of a child with a disability. Medical reasons could also exempt a recipient from participating for a specific period. People unable to work as a result of drug addiction or dependency have their benefits reduced by $46 per month; the savings are invested in treatment programs for them.

There is little flexibility in the YW and WW model; however, there is local flexibility in terms of finding ways to meet participants' specific needs (flexible employability agreements). Also at the local level, more effort and resources are invested in the participant with multiple barriers. YW and WW are not limited to certain categories of social assistance recipients, but youth do have a priority. The programs take into account the fact that women and men tend to predominate in different jobs in the local economy, with priority placements offered according to proportion of the population. Community resources are available to meet the special needs of some groups of participants, such as people with disabilities and victims of spousal abuse. Special programs are contracted to meet the needs of youth at risk. Employers must ensure that no existing worker is displaced.

Financial assistance is provided under BC Benefits, which has doubled its training and employability budget from $60 million to $120 million. In any given month of 1997–98, an average of 90,828 income assistance recipients were considered eligible and required to participate in YW or WW programs.

Information and orientation are provided to program participants at the outset. Periodically, staff contact program participants to assess eligibility, refer participants to programs, determine participant readiness for activities, develop the employability agreement, monitor progress and compliance and apply sanctions if required.

Both YW and WW will be evaluated at several times. Sub-programs are evaluated individually. Findings will be used to improve administrative processes, inform on long-term impacts, inform on best practices, advocate for funding increases, inform decisions on whether and how to change or end programs and inform adaptations in how BC Benefits does business with service providers.

Because of the federal–provincial Labour Market Development Agreement, all current federal employment programs will be coming to the province of British Columbia to administer. Over the next two years, the federal and provincial employment training programs will be changing as needed to reflect the merging of the programs.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Programs

Youth Works (YW), Welfare to Work (WW)

Description

YW and WW are components of BC Benefits, which represents a major renewal of British Columbia's social safety net and includes specific initiatives that will replace most of the existing welfare system. The programs are under the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) and the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR).

YW provides youth aged 19 to 24 with a living allowance and programs and services to enable them to move into employment. It is available to youth whose income and assets are too low for self-support. To be eligible to receive the living allowance, the youth must participate in a range of employability programs, including Independent Job Search, Assisted Job Search and longer-term employability and training programs. Ongoing participation is required. YW operates under the BC Benefits (Youth Works) Act, which came into force March 31, 1997.

WW offers employment-related programming, including Independent Job Search, Assisted Job Search and longer-term employability and training programs, to adults 25 years of age and over on income assistance. The programs are established and eligibility for participants is determined under the BC Benefits (Income Assistance) Act of March 31, 1997.

YW as a mandatory program was a priority in implementation. WW came later; those participants received second priority.

Goals

YW and WW have the following goals:

- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment
- develop attachment to the labour force in shortest time possible
- make employment more financially attractive than social assistance
- promote lasting connections to the labour market
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance
- reduce poverty
- contain costs so that new initiatives can be supported by welfare systems savings

Program Rationale

In 1995, 1 in 10 people in British Columbia and 1 in every 5 children (under five years) were relying on income assistance. Pressures that were forcing British Columbia to do more with less money included the following:

- a changing world economy. Economic growth had created few of traditional jobs that paid high wages without requiring extensive training. Most new jobs required specific skills; it is estimated that three-quarters of new jobs created from now to the end of the decade will require training beyond high school.
- a changed welfare population. The caseload had grown by 66.8% in the previous six years because of the influx of people moving to the province, the increase in single families and changes to the Employment Insurance program.
- a changed social assistance profile. People considered employable were making up more than 70% of the caseload.
- severe cuts in federal spending. Employment Insurance cuts were expected to cause a $333 million increase in British Columbia's income assistance costs between 1991 and 1997. Until 1989, the federal government paid half of the province's welfare costs; after 1989, they paid only one-third. The 1995 budget cut funding transfers for essential social programs by $7.2 billion over three years. The latest funding cuts will amount to about $824 million per year once the cuts are fully implemented in 1998.
- the influx of people moving to British Columbia
- the increase in single-parent families
- the new federal restrictions on Employment Insurance eligibility

In response, BC Benefits attempted to contain costs so that new initiatives could be supported by savings within the welfare system. It was designed to strike the balance between what is needed, what is possible and what is affordable. It is different from past welfare program experiences in that it imposes new obligations on the recipient, puts responsibility on government to ensure that people are looking for work and provides assistance such as training and post-secondary education for those who need it most.

Reduction of rates and restructuring of earnings exemptions were to save $88 million. Caseload reductions from new work and training opportunities and from the introduction of the three-month residency requirement were to save $119.9 million. New expenditures in job-search and training programs for income assistance recipients, additional child care subsidies to meet increased demand and transition benefits were to cost $86.8 million. Family Bonus and Healthy Kids dental and health care for children in low-income families were to cost $90.8 million. The projected savings are close to $20 million.

Program Activities

Main Activity
Two types of programming – job search and placement, and employability skills programs and services – are offered. Participants are eligible for an increasing range of services as their time on assistance and need for intervention increases.

Specific Activities
The following types of activities occur in both YW and WW:

- adult basic education/literacy training
- second language training
- life skills training
- community employment training
- counselling and personal management skills for
    - job stress
    - family stress
    - family violence
    - stress of balancing employment and family conflicts
    - stress of balancing school and family conflicts
    - substance abuse (if a referral is made)
- high-school completion
- job-readiness training
    - counselling
    - job-search training
    - assisted job search
    - career planning (employability agreement)
    - job referrals
    - job-finding clubs
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience
- self-employment and entrepreneurial activity
- volunteer activities

Recipients move through the system in phases as needed.

Phase 1, the Independent Job Search, is available to individuals from the time they start to receive income assistance. The program ensures that community-based resources are available to assist in job searching and allows MAETT to establish services that are missing. At a minimum, MAETT ensures that participants have access to printed material and information sessions that orient the participant to do an effective job search.

Under this program, MAETT ensures that local resources are available to assist people seeking a job. These resources include the following:

- job search resources and guides
- information or orientation sessions on job searching and employment
- resume, messaging, copying and fax services
- job placement services
- Internet access
- transportation assistance
- job search programs up to five days.

Where resources or are not available or access is limited, MAETT ensures that services are available by contracting with local agencies for delivery or by other means. Many of these services may be provided free of charge by Human Resources Development Canada or other community resources. MAETT does not create duplicate services under this program.

Phase 2, the Assisted Job Search, provides additional assistance in job searching to YW and WW participants who have not found employment after seven months of the Independent Job Search Program. Assisted Job Search programs help YW and WW participants improve the effectiveness of their job search and keep long-term employment.

Phase 2 has three main program areas:

- Assisted Job Search. A range of services may be offered to ensure that each participant gets the most appropriate assistance for her or his job search.
- Assessment, Counselling and Referral. ACR is a federal–provincial initiative that provides services similar to those of the Assisted Job Search but for both Employment Insurance and YW or WW participants. For 1998–99, the final year of the initiative, the province agrees to spend a minimum of $1.7 million on these functions.
- Workplace-Based Training. WBT objectives are to place eligible YW and WW participants in long-term employment, improve their work-related skills and the existing workforce and increase the investment of employers and business communities in the employment of the long-term unemployed. WBT is delivered through five major brokers representing different employment sectors and geographic regions. The brokers place participants in employment and administer training credits to participating employers. Employers who agree to employ participants for one year are eligible for a training credit paid by the broker. Training credits range from $3,000 to $4,000 per participant, depending on the broker model. The maximum cost per placement is $6,500.

Participants in the Assisted Job Search Program receive individual attention. They normally gain access to the services through referral or a Skills Development Office. Specific services include

- assessment (group, individual and diagnostic)
- counselling and referral
- individual supports (counselling and facilitation)
- supervised job searching
- transportation assistance
- job placement
- all services provided under Phase 1

Phase 3, Employability Skills, provides YW and WW participants with services to focus on gaps in their skills and experience. Programs seek to address these gaps so that recipients can secure and maintain employment.

Phase 3 has three main program areas:

- Job Readiness. These programs integrate training with employment and personal management skills. Specific programs include the following:
  - Community Employment Training teaches personal development and management skills, learning and critical thinking skills, and job-related skills and knowledge.
  - At Risk Minors Services provides social harm-reduction services to minors (this program is being transferred to the Ministry of Children and Families in 1998–99).
  - Bridging Programs for Women provides abuse survivors with supports, training and employment opportunities.
- Volunteer Incentives. This program provides opportunities for volunteer work experience.
- Basic Education. This program provides supports to participants seeking educational upgrading or specific skill training.

Participants in Phase 3 can continue to gain access to all services offered under phases 1 and 2.

Training and Educational Activities

Training and education programs are provided by colleges, employers, private training centres or local contractors, program providers and community-based organizations.

Training or education programs developed specifically for YW or WW participants include the following:

- Request for Info is a MAETT process that identifies qualified contractors interested in providing contracted training services for YW and WW programs.

- Job readiness programs are delivered by contractors to groups of recipients on a project basis. Job readiness programs include Community Employment Training, Bridging Programs for Women and Youth Employment Skills.

Five brokers are delivering a province-wide Workplace-Based Training program.

Employment placements have been created through equity pilot projects that target single parents, people with disabilities, aboriginal people and visible minorities throughout the province.

Student financial assistance programs support participation in existing post-secondary programs. Students entering post-secondary education are considered to have opted out of YW or WW; income assistance must be sought through Student Financial Assistance. Students may be eligible for loan remission, a British Columbia grant or a BC Benefits Family Bonus, which offers almost identical assistance as the previous policy.

Employment-Based Activities
Private, public and non-profit employers participate in YW and WW employment-based activities.

The types of occupations available to YW and WW participants are usually in service sector (e.g., tree service, truck driver, receptionist, office manager). Over 700 employers are now participating in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island regions. More than 1,000 jobs have been secured for participants and over 500 recipients are employed (through the Workplace-Based Training program). WBT jobs have been full-time (30 hours per week for 12 months), entry-level jobs with pay levels of at least minimum wage.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

MAETT and MHR were jointly responsible for designing the YW and WW, with MHR focusing on financial assistance and MAETT focusing on training. MAETT is responsible for primary, secondary and post-secondary education as well as skills and training.

Responsibility for Implementation

Responsibility for implementation lies with various partners:

- Assessment, Counselling and Referral and Labour Market Information are joint federal–provincial strategic initiatives.

- MHR is principally responsible for the administration and monitoring of financial activities and program eligibility during phases 1 and 2. MHR is also responsible for the living allowance and the administration of five YW demonstration offices, designed as flagships for the YW program.
- MAETT monitors activity eligibility during the term of the employability agreement. MAETT is also responsible for educational and workplace-based training activities.
- Program providers (contractors) are responsible for sub-programs such as Community Employment Training, Youth Employment Skills and Bridging Programs for Women).
- Private sector businesses (contractors or brokers) are responsible for the Workplace-Based Training program.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

There is little flexibility in the YW and WW model; however, there is more flexibility toward participants in terms of finding ways to meet their specific needs at the local level.

Participants are encouraged to find jobs within seven months. Many do, but a longitudinal panel study is indicating that many return to the programs. This issue is being addressed at the local level through flexible employability agreements.

Also at the local level, more effort and resources are invested in the participant with multiple barriers.

Duration of the Program

YW and WW began in January 1996 and are ongoing.

Each phase of the programs has a timeframe for participant completion:

- Phase 1, Independent Job Search, seven months
- Phase 2, Assisted Job Search, two months
- Phase 3, Employability Skills, no set timeframe. Youth have priority for employability programming. If spaces are still available, then adults may also choose employability programs.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

Financial assistance is provided under BC Benefits, which has doubled its training and employability budget from $60 million to $120 million.

The following assistance is provided:

- income support. MHR provides income support to participants of YW and WW. During phases 1 and 2, young people receive a youth allowance, which replaces welfare assistance, and adults receive income support. During Phase 3, Workplace-Based Training, youth and adults are paid by the employer.

- temporary financial support
  - WW provides temporary financial support for recipients 25 years and older until they are able to find a job. YW replaces welfare for youth between 19 and 25 by guaranteeing eligible participants access to job searching, job preparation, work experience or job-readiness training. Eligibility for either program is determined by stringent rules. Asset levels are limited to no more than $500 for a single employable and $1,000 for a childless couple. Primary cars and home costs are not included in calculating these levels. Financial support for employable adults without dependants is based on the activity in which they participate. Adults in workplace-based training and mentored work experience are employed in the private sector and paid at least the minimum wage by their employer. A single employable youth is eligible to receive up to $500 per month. Young parent participants have access to the provincial child-care subsidy to ensure that they can fully benefit from the initiatives. In both YW and WW, single parents are required to participate when their youngest child reaches the age of seven. Families with dependant children leaving YW or WW are eligible for a transition-to-work bonus.
- upgrading costs. MAETT provides Training Assistance Benefits for direct educational costs incurred by YW or WW recipients requiring upgrading.
- training allowances. Training assistance may be provided through Human Resources Development Canada for participants who were Employment Insurance claimants in the past three to five years. Training allowances are also provided by MAETT for transportation, books or supplies and safety equipment necessary to participate in training or work placement. Authorization can be given to post-secondary institutions to provide Training Assistance Benefits to participants approved for basic education in Adult Basic Education, English Language Training, Adult Special Education and other programs.
- compensation for job-related expenses
- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction
- child-care subsidies or compensation for child-care expenses
- transportation subsidies
- housing subsidies
- moving expenses. These are covered if the participant is moving to get a confirmed job elsewhere, for repatriation reasons such as returning to one's family or province of origin, to less expensive accommodation or to remove herself or himself from an abusive situation.
- assistance for persons with disabilities
- supplemental health care
- dental care

Rate changes are helping to pay for training costs. Current rates are being maintained for families with dependant children, adults 55 to 64 years, people with disabilities and people who are temporarily medically unemployable. A rate reduction for employable adults between 25 and 54 years who do not have dependants is generating savings that are being invested in training opportunities.

Deadlines and Subsidies

During all phases, participants must demonstrate that they are making reasonable efforts to secure employment. For YW participants, demonstration means participation at all required meetings, sessions and activities and an active, ongoing job search. For WW participants, demonstration means an active, ongoing job search and participation in other programs subject to availability and MAETT approval.

Full participation is expected. If participants do not attend a required meeting or session, they must provide a valid reason; otherwise, they risk having their benefits discontinued.

WW and YW recognize the desirability of allowing individuals to earn a greater income than that available under the existing welfare system. After their first three months in YW, youth are able to keep up to 25% of any income earned for a maximum of 12 months. For families with dependants currently receiving welfare, the existing earnings exemption is continued for a three-month transition period. Similarly, after WW participants have been in the program for three months, they are permitted to keep 25% of any other income they earn. This benefit is available for one 12-month period only. For families with dependants currently receiving welfare, the existing earnings exemption is continued for a three-month transition period. Youth may be eligible for Human Resources Development Canada training assistance and still get a living allowance.

Child support payments received by program participants affect the amount of financial assistance provided. There is a $100 exemption. The unpredictability of child support payments is taken into account through a monthly claim or report; participants who do not receive that month's payment from their spouse can report it and be compensated.

Financial Incentives for Employers

In the Workplace-Based Training program, participating employers who agree to employ participants for one year are eligible for a training credit paid by the broker to offset the direct costs of training. Training credits are predetermined through the contract negotiations between the broker and the Ministry. The credits range from $3,000 to $4,000 per participant depending on the broker model.

The training credit may be applied to participant training or may be divided between participant and existing employee training and the supervision for the participant's on-the-job training.

Employers are required to pay the full salary, not replace existing workers, prepare a training plan and make their best attempt at providing participants with full-time employment after completion of the program. Credits cannot be used to subsidize the wages of participants.

Program Funding

$ Millions			
	1997/98 Original Budget	**1997/98 Actual and Proj. Expenditures**	**1998/99 Budget Requirements**
IJS	2,190	0.933	3.75
AJS less ACR & WBT	10,330	11,049	10.75
ACR	3,086	2,605	0
WBT	20,605	20,185	20.0
TOTAL AJS	34,021	33,839	30.75
Employability Skills less ARMS and Bridging	36,379	31,753	30.93
Bridging	5,283	4,685	3.60
ARMS	2,580	2,334	0.0
TOTAL ES	44,242	38,772	34,530
TOTAL YW/WW	80,453	73,606	69.03

In 1997-98, the total YW and WW expenditure was $73,606 million, allocated as follows:

- Phase 1, Independent Job Search, $0.933 million
- Phase 2, Assisted Job Search, total $33,839 million
  - Assessment, Counselling and Referral (included in the above figure) $2,605 million
  - Workplace-Based Training (included above) $20,185 million

- Phase 3, Employability Skills, total $38,772 million
  - At Risk Minors Services (included above) $2,334 million
  - Bridging Programs for Woman (included above) $4,685 million

The average cost per participant for Phase 1 is currently estimated at $23.80 per person for the information sessions and about $8 each for the information kits. The average cost per participant for Phase 2 is currently estimated at $500. The average cost per participant for Phase 3 in the 1996-97 fiscal year was approximately $2,200.

The British Columbia government plans to effect reductions in income support levels through an anticipated decrease in demand, a tightening of eligibility criteria and tough measures to fight fraud and abuse.

As BC Benefits move from the introduction of the cost-neutral model into the ongoing business of administering government programs, it is possible that funding could increase or decrease depending on the fiscal climate and demand.

Cuts have diminished the amount of MHR staff time. Each MHR worker has about 300 cases. Each training consultant has 150 to 200 cases.

Subsidized Child Care

The day-care subsidy is a British Columbia government program to help low-income families pay for child care. Subsidies are available for both full-day and part-day care and to the caregiver of the parents' choice.

Child-care subsidies are available to program participants under WW, YW and general social assistance. Child care not subsidized by the program is expected to be covered by another program. For single parents, new programs along with additional funds for child care are provided. The amount of the subsidy is based on the number of people in the family, the type of care, the age of the child and the family's net income. An income test is used to calculate whether the family is eligible for a full or partial subsidy.

There is a maximum subsidy rate for each type of child-care arrangement. If the fees charged by the caregiver are higher than the subsidy, parents are responsible for the difference.

Although child care generally is adequate, there are not enough licensed child care spaces in the province.

The child-care subsidy program was formerly delivered by the Ministry of Social Services for the Ministry of Women's Equality. Responsibility has now been transferred to the Ministry of Children and Families.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

YW BC Benefits provides financial support to youth aged 19 to 24 if they participate in job search and work preparation programs. Single parents between the ages of 19 and 24 are required to participate in YW when their youngest child reaches the age of seven.

Welfare is no longer available to youth between 19 and 24 years. In its place, YW guarantees eligible youth access to job searching, job preparation, work experience or job-readiness training. To be eligible for income support, the person must meet rigorous financial eligibility criteria, demonstrate active searching for employment and participate in a program designed to facilitate entry into the workforce.

Eligible youth may also include the following:
- youth in care
- minors who are in the Child in Home of Relative program under the BC Benefits Act
- youth who have an agreement with the Director of Children and Family Services (former youth in care)
- underage BC Benefits income assistance recipients
- youth (18–24) receiving disability benefits
- minors who are dependants of income assistance recipients

WW WW redirects employable adults from welfare into job searching, training and work experience, subject to availability (unlike YW, access is not guaranteed). During phases 1 and 2, adults aged 25 and over are required to seek employment as a condition of receiving a living allowance unless they have a disability, are unemployable, are single parents with dependants under the age of seven or are single parents of a dependant child with a disability that precludes the parent from seeking employment. After at least nine months of job searching, WW recipients are eligible to participate in Phase 3 programs subject to available space.

YW and WW are not limited to certain categories of social assistance recipients, but youth do have a priority. Youth are targeted for the following reasons:
- Almost 25% of the GAIN (Guaranteed Available Income for Need) caseload is under 24 years of age (including children). Among those between 20 and 24, 45% are single people without dependants and a further 20% are couples without dependants.

- About 20% of people aged 20 to 24 have not completed grade 12; however, about two-thirds of projected employment opportunities are expected to require technical skills, occupational knowledge and strong employability skills. New jobs being created in British Columbia will likely be filled by people with more than a high school education.
- The increase in the unemployment rate has been most severe for young people, largely because many do not have the job skills or experience that employers are demanding.

Parents of children under seven years of age are not required to participate. If a person's status changes while in Phase 3 (e.g., recipient turns 25 or has a baby), the recipient is allowed to finish the current activity or training program before being transferred to another BC Benefits program or eligibility status.

Caseloads

In any given month of 1997–98, an average of 90,828 income assistance recipients were considered eligible and required to participate in YW or WW programs:

- Phase 1, Independent Job Search, 7,381 (YW) and 25,095 (WW)
- Phase 2, Assisted Job Search, 1,077 (YW) and 4,126 (WW)
- Phase 3, Employability Skills, 5,878 (YW) and 47,271 (WW)

Output Indicators	1997/98 Projected Outcomes	1997/98 Actual Outcomes	1997/99 Proposed Outcomes
IJS	52,000 participants 38,000 IA 14,000 YW	43,333 participants 13,667 IA 11,667 YW	16,788 YW participants from 8,702 to 58,012 WW recipients
AJS	10,000 YW 32,000 WW	10,675 IA 6,017	6,039 YW from 3,646 to 24,308 WW
AJS/WBT	3,652 employed	4,509 employed	4,100 employed
Employability Skills	9,000 YW served 55,000 WW eligible	4,744 YW served 11,789 IA	4,934 YW served from 5,397 to 35,979 WW served
TOTAL	Services available 158,000 (33,000 YW served)	81,067 served 23,555 YW	27,762 YW served 17,745 to 118,298 WW served

The following types of information are gathered about potential participants:

- demographics, citizenship, number of children
- education and training history
- employment history
- medical-social information (medical information, housing, receiving professional help)
- child care needs and use
- length of time in receipt of social assistance
- equity information
- languages spoken and written
- barriers to employment

In October 1996, single male recipients continued to make up the largest portion of YW at 42%, despite a decline of 32% from January to October. Single female YW recipients made up 22% of the caseload despite a decline of 24% from January to October.

Single-parent families make up 31% of YW recipients. There has been a 12% decline between July and October. Single parents predominate in Phase 3 of WW.

Nature of Participation

Although the program framework is the same for YW and WW, access is an entitlement for youth and participation is an eligibility criterion for ongoing income support. WW recipients have access to available training spaces and are required to seek work as an eligibility criterion for income assistance but are not required to participate in training.

YW participation is mandatory for youth in all three phases. In WW, phase 1 participation is mandatory for employable adults. Phase 2 is mandatory if a participant has been unable to find a job after seven months in phase 1; Phase 2 programs include career planning, skill plan development and job-finding clubs. After two months in Phase 2, the participant can apply to enter a programs to meet his or her specific needs. A variety of training and work experience options are offered during this phase of the program, subject to availability. Limited programming resources result in waiting periods for some programs.

Employable recipients cannot refuse to participate in the programs. Programs are optional for everyone over 60, single parents with children under seven, single parents of a child with a disability, people who require special care and people with a disability. Medical reasons could also exempt a recipient from participating for a specific period. Existing rates are maintained for youth considered medically unable to work. People unable to work as a result of drug addiction or dependency have their benefits reduced by $46 per month; the savings are invested in treatment programs for them.

Participants could leave the programs and not be penalized under the following circumstances:
- change of status (e.g., parenthood)
- illness or disability renders them unemployable
- care of a child with a disability

YW and WW have been able to serve all those who are required to participate in the programs and all those who wish to participate.

Orientation and Follow-up

Information and orientation are provided to program participants at the outset. Youth receive a job search information kit. Tools used in orientation sessions include *What Works* (the Labour Market Information Bulletin), work search videos and Starting Program.

Periodically, staff contact program participants to
- assess participant eligibility
- refer participants to programs
- determine participant readiness for activities
- develop the employability agreement
- monitor progress and compliance
- apply sanctions if required

Appeals Process

No appeals process has been established.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

YW and WW are province-wide programs.

The following provincial economic conditions were taken into account in designing the programs:
- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities
- employment trends
- unemployment rates
- social assistance rates

The high social assistance costs and poor track record in job creation prompted the decision to focus on training rather than job creation. YW and WW support workplace-based training only in settings where jobs exist. Nevertheless, there is concern about whether the labour market can absorb all the job seekers.

The decision to focus on youth was influenced by the apparent disappearance of the stigma formally felt by youth on welfare in British Columbia. The decision was made to end a lifestyle while emphasizing employment and responsibility.

When YW or WW contracts brokers to find jobs for participants, brokers are seen as taking the place of extended family that in a traditional community would have helped the young person on the path to finding work.

From April to October 1996, 350 more YW participants moved to post-secondary education than in the previous year. No baseline data is available. Since 1992, income support for single parents in post-secondary education has not been available through MHR.

Employment-related design considerations included the Labour Market Information (LMI) initiative, which features regional forums to identify and build on community labour market information needs, pilot projects to test innovative community delivery models, the implementation of new technologies for LMI (e.g., testing, piloting and mounting LMI materials on diskette, CD-ROM, the Internet or television) and data development initiatives focused on enhanced occupational forecasting models.

Employment Equity and Displacement

YW and WW take into account the fact that women and men tend to predominate in different jobs in the local economy. The programs are aimed toward mainstream equity groups to offer priority placements according to their proportion of the population.

Employers in the Workplace-Based Training program must ensure that no existing worker is displaced. MAETT spot-checks employers' staff complements before and after program participation.

Community Services

Integration of Community Services

The range of WW and YW programs delivered in each community depends on local job market conditions, the availability of services and the needs of participants in that community. Whenever possible, service delivery is provided through arrangements with local, non-governmental community agencies.

Many YW and WW sub-programs are implemented by contractors, who submit proposals to provide services in the different phases.

Community resources are available to meet the special needs of some groups of participants, such as people with disabilities and victims of spousal abuse. Special programs are contracted to meet the needs of youth at risk such as At Risk Minor Services and Bridging Programs for Women.

Single-Window Access

Measures are taken to ensure that there is minimum duplication of services; however, training, employment programs and income support services have not yet been integrated to provide single-window access. British Columbia is moving toward the devolution of labour market training to the province.

Community Diversity

The following demographics of social assistance recipients are taken into account in program design:

- age
- sex
- family composition (type of family)
- family size
- rural or urban dweller
- ethnocultural background or visible minority
- disability status

The programs are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

YW will be evaluated according to the BC Benefits Evaluation and Accountability Plan, as required by Treasury Board. The following data is gathered:

- the number of participants who received information
- the number of kits and videos that were distributed and through what mechanisms
- the number of recipients who participated and in which programs
- the number of participants who moved off income assistance
- what interventions assisted them to move off income assistance
- the average cost per participant for the different phases and programs
- the increase or decrease in the number of participants exiting social assistance
- the number of participants who obtained jobs

YW and WW are being evaluated at several points and times. For example, five years is the first timeline for the BC Benefits Longitudinal Panel, and program-specific evaluations tend to be over six to eight months. There are five core evaluation projects:

- Client Tracking and Compliance (CTAC) and Contract Monitoring and Reporting (CMAR) reports. CTAC manages participant records, tracks Ministry and participant activities, supports the provision of skills programming, tracks associated costs, supports the determination of compliance and provides regular and ad hoc reports. CMAR supports the main functions of budget management, contract financial management and contract performance management.
- comparative analysis of monitoring forms and data
- the BC Benefits Longitudinal Project. Initiated in March 1997, this project monitors and tracks a panel of 2,000 GAIN (Guaranteed Available Income for Need) recipients. The panel will provide valuable information about the long-term impacts of training programs on youth.
- meta-analysis of Skills Development Division program evaluations
- evaluation of BC Benefits, YW and WW program elements

A detailed plan has been developed for the evaluation of the YW demonstration offices.

Other programs such as Youth Employment Skills, Workplace-Based Training and the Bridging Programs for Women are being evaluated individually.

The proportion of the budget set aside for program evaluation is half of 1% of the total budget, which is $97.52 million.

Consulting groups are contracted by the Skills Development Division of MAETT to conduct evaluations. For example, the NHN Consulting Group evaluated the Youth Employment Skills program. The Skills Development Division does the internal analysis of the contracted evaluations.

Cost–Benefit Research

Although the current foci of evaluation are on processes and recipient profiles, cost–benefit research is included in program evaluation.

Monetary costs and benefits being measured include the following:

- cost per participant for the different types of intervention
- net savings to Income Assistance
- net increase in individual earnings
- incremental job advancement

Non-monetary costs and benefits being measured include the following:

- participant satisfaction with the programs
- the utility of the programs
- participant self-esteem
- harm reduction (e.g., the benefits of not going back to an abusive situation)

Outcome Data

Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance
- the number of participants who get jobs
- the proportion of participants who leave social assistance
- the proportion of participants who get jobs
- the extent to which program participants retain the jobs they get. Contractors are tracking participants from 6 to 12 months or more after they leave a program. Evaluators are also looking at people retrospectively.
- the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare
- the nature of jobs obtained by program participants (i.e., full-time, part-time, short-term, long-term, seasonal, contract, temporary, flexible)
- the levels of jobs obtained by program participants (i.e., entry-level jobs, pay levels, skills levels)
- the types of occupations obtained by program participants
- employment earnings
- family income

Participant Evaluation

Data will be collected to track changes in participants' job readiness; however, the indicators are still being developed.

Information is being collected on aspects of family well-being such as the ages of children, child-care use and the supports that participants with families need to get through the programs.

Participants' level of satisfaction with the programs is not being assessed.

The BC Benefits Longitudinal Panel study is tracking the characteristics of participants to determine the types of programs that are most suitable to specific groups of recipients.

The performance of service providers is being monitored.

Uses of Findings

Findings will be used to

- improve administrative processes
- inform on long-term impacts
- inform on best practices
- advocate for funding increases
- inform decisions on whether and how to adapt, end, increase or improve programs
- inform adaptations in how BC Benefits does business with service providers

Other Issues

The assessment does not evaluate delayed welfare exits – i.e., later-than-expected exits from the social assistance system that result from individuals extending their period of welfare receipt to qualify for the program.

The phased approach of YW and WW is designed to discourage delayed welfare exits. The more expensive programs that focus on increasing employability are in Phase 3, which is available only after 10 months.

There have been complaints from Bridging Programs for Women and Assessment, Counselling and Referral evaluations that the seven-month Independent Job Search constitutes a waiting period and prevents people from taking steps to improve their employability by participating in Phase 3 activities.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

Because of the federal–provincial Labour Market Development Agreement, all current federal employment programs will be coming to the province of British Columbia to administer. Over the next two years, the federal and provincial employment training programs will be changing as needed to reflect the merging of the programs.

Contact

NAME: Jennifer Standeven
TITLE: A/Director
Program Planning and Development
ADDRESS: Ministry of Education, Skills and Training
Program Planning and Development
PO Box 9872, Stn. Prov. Gov., BC
V8W 9T6
E-MAIL: jennifer.standeven@gems7.gov.bc.ca
TELEPHONE: (250) 356-5989
FAX: (250) 387-0262

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- The Facts about Healthy Kids
- The Facts about Welfare to Work
- The Facts about Youth Works
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- Youth Works Report, July 1996
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- Youth Works Report, 2 September 1996
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- Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, 1997–98 and 1998–99 Evaluation Plan
- Program Evaluation Report: Youth Employment Skills
- Assessment Counselling Referral Strategic Initiative Manual
- SI Status Report, Assessment Counselling Referral
- Labour Market Information Initiative Evaluation Framework
- SI Status Report, Labour Market Information

Index of Acronyms

ACR - Assessment, Counselling and Referral
AJS - Assisted Job Search
ARMS - At Risk Minors Services
CMAR - Contract Monitoring and Reporting
CTAC - Client Tracking and Compliance
ES - Employability Skills
IJS - Independent Job Search
LMI - Labour Market Information
MAETT - Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology
MHR - Ministry of Human Resources
WBT - Workplace-Based Training
WW - Welfare to Work
YW - Youth Works

YUKON TERRITORY

Less written documentation was received for the Yukon Territory than for most other jurisdictions included in this inventory; in addition, there were no meetings with territorial officials. Consequently, there is no attempt to respond to all inventory subjects; rather, the aim is to provide a general understanding of the program in the Yukon in terms of each major thematic area.

Summary

Employment Training Services (ETS) and Headstart (HS) are programs of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. ETS provides individual counselling to social assistance recipients on training, employment and attaining self-sufficiency. HS is a job-training and wage-subsidy program designed exclusively for social assistance recipients. It began in 1993 as a federal–territorial joint program under the Social Assistance Recipients Agreement and was expanded to accommodate 45 people in 1994–95.

ETS and HS are the results of government action to increase the employability of social assistance recipients, eliminate waste, detect fraud, recover monies where appropriate and introduce incentives to get recipients off social assistance through increased exemptions.

Training and education are primarily provided at Yukon College, and various high schools and literacy programs focus on upgrading. Private sector (any private business in operation for at least six months), public sector (e.g., municipalities, First Nations) and non-profit (e.g., day-care centres) employers participate in the employment-based activities for recipients.

ETS and HS primarily target the longer-term unemployed, including people with disabilities. In most cases, employable people receiving social assistance become eligible for training and wage subsidies when they have been in receipt of social assistance for six months. Although ETS and HS are voluntary, employable social assistance recipients must complete a self-sufficiency plan and show that they are looking for alternative methods of support to continue to be eligible for social assistance. Participants have to complete the entire program within a specified period. For HS, the period is 20 weeks. There is more flexibility in ETS; it is supposed to be a 90-day period but can be longer if required or desired. Participants can repeat HS and ETS. Program participants may lose access to supplements or subsidies if program deadlines are not met. If they are not participating according to reasonable expectations, they will receive only emergency aid to cover food, shelter and utilities. A social assistance applicant or recipient can appeal any departmental decision on eligibility or level of assistance.

Under some circumstances, participants can leave the HS program and not be penalized. These include lack of child care, a communication or other breakdown that makes it unsuitable for the recipient to continue in a placement, family responsibilities or other circumstances beyond the control of the recipient.

There is some local flexibility in program design and implementation; consideration is given to the availability of employment, education, training opportunities and child care in the community. The program was designed to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy. The needs of aboriginal people are primarily met by Indian and Northern Affairs. Single parents and people with disabilities are the focus of some programming.

Funds have been allocated for ETS and HS as ongoing programs. The funding has been relatively constant. For 1996–97, the HS program cost is $300,000. ETS costs $150,000 for two full-time positions, plus benefits, plus $30,000 for contracts. The ETS program has a caseload of about 30 people, who rotate every 90 days. In addition, ETS offers résumé drop-in help and workshops. Total caseload is about 300 per year. The HS program costs $6,000 per participant per year, which means it can handle 50 full-time contracts per year.

All new social assistance applicants attend ETS information workshops to familiarize themselves with opportunities to become self-sufficient. ETS has ongoing self-evaluations that result in changes to improve the program and the services offered. An evaluation of HS is just beginning.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Programs

Employment Training Services (ETS), Headstart (HS)

Description

ETS and HS are sub-programs of the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

ETS provides individual counselling to social assistance recipients on training, employment and attaining self-sufficiency.

HS is a job-training and wage-subsidy program designed exclusively for social assistance recipients. It began in 1993 as a federal–territorial joint program under the Social Assistance Recipients Agreement and was expanded to accommodate 45 people in 1994–95.

Goals

The programs have the following goals:

- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment
- develop the short-term work skills of program participants
- develop the long-term work skills of program participants
- make employment more attractive financially than social assistance
- reduce the rate at which people leave employment and return to social assistance
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance
- protect those who are most vulnerable

Program Rationale

ETS and HS are the results of government action to increase the employability of social assistance recipients, eliminate waste, detect fraud, recover monies where appropriate and introduce incentives to get recipients off social assistance through increased exemptions.

History

In the early 1990s, the Yukon saw a dramatic increase in social assistance expenditures. From 1989 to 1992, program expenditures had increased from $2.8 million to $6.4 million – an increase of 124%. The projected expenditure for 1992–93 was $9.3 million. The Yukon government mandated a thorough and comprehensive review under the direction of an interdepartmental committee to examine the reasons for these increases and to consider realistic options for cost containment.

The review found labour market and economic trends mirroring those across the country. There were fewer jobs in the goods production sector and more low-paying service-sector jobs. The decline in real wages meant that some people – the "working poor" – could not earn enough money to meet their needs. Increasing numbers of the working poor needed social assistance to supplement their income. Fewer people were moving out of the territory to seek jobs elsewhere, and more were moving in. Low metal prices were causing a steady decline in the mining industry, with a resulting loss of jobs and revenue in supporting businesses. There was a relative increase in seasonal employment such as tourism. Food and utilities were expensive in the Yukon, and there was a scarcity of rental accommodation, forcing some people to pay more than they could afford for shelter.

The picture is much the same today. Because the Yukon has such a small population, it is sensitive to even minor fluctuations in the employment sector. The closure of even one large firm may increase the need for social assistance, and the loss of one job in mining is directly associated with the loss of 17 jobs in other sectors, as well as general loss of revenue for support services. In 1996–97, a major mine closed in the Yukon. Unemployment went up significantly, and social assistance caseloads increased.

In the past few years, Employment Insurance has not been able to meet the financial needs of people during the first months of unemployment because of administrative lags in processing claims and increased waiting periods. These people are seeing social assistance as an interim measure. Social assistance continues to be needed as a wage top-up for insufficient part-time earnings. Seasonal employment opportunities are attracting highly motivated, skilled and educated people from outside the Yukon (there is no evidence that people from outside the territory are displacing Yukon workers.)

Applicants' reasons for requiring social assistance closely reflect the economic and employment conditions of the territory. Most report that their need is directly related to a lack of jobs or insufficient employment income. In 1997, 180 people were coming into the social assistance system every month and just 130 were leaving.

ETS and HS were designed and implemented prior to the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). The CHST has not led to any changes to the program.

Program Activities

Main Activity

The primary purpose of the programs is to increase recipients' employability and thus help them get off social assistance.

Specific Activities

The following types of activities are covered by the programs:

- adult basic education/literacy training
- high-school completion
- post-secondary education
  - apprenticeship/trades
- job-readiness training
  - job search training
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training)
- paid work experience

ETS delivers employment and training services to social assistance recipients with the objective of increasing employability and thus lead to recipient self-sufficiency.

ETS counsellors are available to review training and educational self-sufficiency plans and provide feedback. The counsellors receive referrals from recipients on a self-referral basis and from officers requesting ETS on behalf of a recipient. An assessment is done and results are made available to the officer. Two existing staff members were redeployed and are now working directly with the social assistance unit as employment and training counsellors.

All new social assistance applicants attend information workshops to familiarize themselves with opportunities to become self-sufficient. In conjunction with their social worker, they must complete a self-sufficiency plan. The department also funds workshops on job-search skills, résumé writing and career planning, and plans to expand the workshop list to provide more opportunities for recipients to increase their employability skills.

HS is designed to assist social assistance recipients in gaining access to employment or training opportunities that will enhance their employability. Wage subsidies are given to employers who offer employment or on-the-job training for suitable recipients. Suitable recipients are those who have received assistance for four continuous months or more, who have the ability and desire to work and to keep a job or training position for the duration offered by the employer under this program. The program must reflect the skills and objectives needed to meet the trainee's needs and interests. Training objectives vary with each participant. A training outline must be submitted with each application.

The wage subsidy period is a maximum of 20 weeks. Employment is normally 35 hours to a maximum of 40 hour per week. Fewer work hours can be approved by the supervisor under special circumstances. Trainees may be referred to "other related programs" if short-term training or disability issues apply.

Employers receive a maximum of $7.50 per hour subsidy for employment or on-the-job training. The actual wage is set by the employer. It may exceed $7.50/hour, may not be less than minimum wage or the wage-subsidy amount and should reflect the normal trainee wage paid at the worksite. The employer pays Workers Compensation and employer contributions to the Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance, plus vacation pay calculated at 4%.

The employer is not required to hire the trainee at the end of the program, but if the training was successful and a job opening exists, the employer is encouraged to hire the trainee. The program is year-round, but priority is placed on winter months.

Other programs exist that are related to HS:

- Pathways is a similar wage-subsidy program for individuals who have employment-related disabilities. This program is not directed to social assistance recipients.
- Group placements can be arranged under a wage subsidy agreement for larger work projects. These placements are for less than 20 weeks, and a full-time, on-site trainer is required.
- Short-term training (less than 20 weeks) may be accepted for wage subsidy if individuals have most of the skills required by the employer. It is expected that the trainee will qualify for normal employment consideration after the specified short-term training is completed.
- Employers may choose a trainee from among several individuals sent by social services. As the program is voluntary, there are no guarantees that the training position will be filled by individuals that meet the employers' criteria.

Two other programs were funded under the Social Assistance Recipients Agreement but have since been discontinued:

- Trades Related Employment Opportunities was a five-week program run by Yukon College. Some graduates from the program were placed into 20-week training programs under HS.
- Peopleworks was a seven-month job readiness/job placement program.

Training and Educational Activities

Training and education are primarily provided at Yukon College. Various high schools and literacy programs focus on upgrading (i.e., getting a high-school diploma or taking trade-specific enrichment). An applicant may receive support to participate in upgrading courses or training programs. This support occurs under the provision that

- the course or program is part of an approved self-sufficiency plan
- the course is of a very short duration
- the course will lead directly to self-sufficiency.

The applicant must also exhaust all other possible financial resources available to them.

Employment-Based Activities

Private sector (any private business in operation for at least six months), public sector (e.g., municipalities, First Nations) and non-profit (e.g., day-care centres) employers participate in the employment-based activities for recipients.

Occupations available to participants as part of the HS program include day-care worker, administrative assistant, computer worker, labourer, receptionist, data entry clerk, sales clerk, cook, gardening worker, construction worker and all aspects of the service industry, which predominates in the Yukon.

Job placements may be full-time or short-term (20 weeks). Job-finding assistance includes

- identifying job openings
- marketing participants to employers
- arranging interviews for participants
- offering résumé workshops to help participants review their situation and develop a plan for self-sufficiency

The programs include measures to build strong links with local employers to help participants gain employment experience and find jobs. The types of skills the programs aim to develop include job-finding and job-keeping skills, such as how to keep a job for longer, communicating, problem-solving and budgeting. An inventory of employers and the skills they require is provided. A recipient might be sent for a short skills course to qualify them for an available position.

Employers are asked to pay social assistance recipients the same wages paid to other employees. The program aims for more meaningful, better paid jobs and tries to guard against being a pool of low-income workers.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

Yukon Health and Social Services is responsible for program design.

Responsibility for Implementation

Yukon Health and Social Services is primarily responsible for implementing the programs.

Recently, a labour market agreement was signed with the Ministry of Education for a collaborative approach to Employment Insurance.

The government is revisiting its 1992 Training Strategy with particular attention to addressing the training needs of social assistance recipients and enabling them to gain access to advanced education.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

There is some local flexibility in program design and implementation. For example, the government has changed its regulations to define a parent as employable when the youngest child reaches the age of two years (rather than six, as it previously stood); however, consideration is given to the availability of employment, education, training opportunities and child care in the community. The department offers special counselling and job-readiness programs for people affected by this change.

Duration of the Program

In their current format, ETS and HS began April 1, 1995, and are ongoing. A precursor to HS began in 1993 as a federal–territorial joint program under the Social Assistance Recipients Agreement.

Participants have to complete the entire program within a specified period. For HS, the period is 20 weeks. There is more flexibility in ETS; it is supposed to be a 90-day period but can be longer if required or desired. Participants can repeat HS and ETS.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants
Financial assistance is provided by Yukon Health and Social Services under the social assistance program.

In HS, wage supplements as described above are provided. A person in HS goes off social assistance if they do not need a top-up.

In ETS, the following assistance is provided:

- training allowances. The department normally covers the cost of tuition, registration, books and related expenses on the provision that they cannot be paid from any other source.
- compensation for job-related expenses. There is no longer an allowance for employment expenses; however, an advance may be made if the applicant qualifies and agrees to repay employment expenses.
- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction. Exempted income includes
  - income of up to $50 per month for a single person and up to $100 for families
  - beginning in the fourth month on social assistance, 25% of all earned income
  - all earned income of a dependent under 19 living at home and attending school full-time
- compensation for child-care expenses
- transitional benefits. Any recipient who has received regular social assistance benefits for a minimum of six consecutive months and who then, due to employment, ceases to be eligible for regular benefits may be entitled to receive transitional benefits for health care services and child care for a further six months. Transitional benefits are paid for only one period of up to six months, are at the same rate as if the person were still receiving regular assistance and are paid only to the extent that the expenses are not covered by any other program.
- transportation subsidies. Allowances may be provided for transportation expenses if required for employment or health reasons at a rate established by the Director. Applicants who are working, looking for work or who have health problems may be eligible for a monthly allowance, the equivalent of a monthly bus pass, to assist them with their transportation needs.
- housing subsidies. These are available to all Yukoners based on their income through Yukon Housing.

- moving expenses. An allowance may be provided if required for household moving expenses when a change of residence is necessary as a result of
  - meeting the requirements of the relocation policy
  - moving within the territory to confirmed employment
  - fleeing an abusive relationship
- supplemental health care. An allowance may be provided for necessary but non-emergency dental work or oral surgery, dentures, eyeglasses and artificial eyes, hearing aids and batteries, family planning devices, items necessary for a person with a disability and other items of personal use approved by the Director and at rates established by the Director.
- dental care. Basic and essential dental service is funded for qualified applicants of social assistance.

Deadlines and Subsidies
Program participants may lose access to supplements or subsidies if program deadlines are not met. If they are not participating according to reasonable expectations, they will receive only emergency aid to cover food, shelter and utilities.

Child support payments received by program participants affect the amount of financial assistance provided to them.

Financial Incentives for Employers
Through HS, employers are offered up to $7.50 per hour or $225 per week to provide work experience or on-the-job training.

Program Funding
Funds have been allocated for ETS and HS as ongoing programs. The funding has been relatively constant. For 1996–97, the HS program cost is $300,000. ETS costs $150,000 for two full-time positions, plus benefits, plus $30,000 for contracts.

Subsidized Child Care

Child-care subsidies are available to program participants under general social assistance.

If the cost of child care is not payable under the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP), an allowance may be provided

- for full-time or half-time child care at the same rate as established under the CCSP
- for less-than-half-time child care at the rate of $3 per hour.

Under the Child Care Act and Regulations, the child-care allowance will not be paid for illegal child care.

As a transitional benefit, any recipient who has received regular social assistance benefits for a minimum of six consecutive months and who then, due to employment, ceases to be eligible for regular benefits may be entitled to a child-care subsidy for the six months after they cease to be eligible for regular assistance benefits. This transitional benefit is paid for only one period of up to six months, is at the same rate as if the person were still receiving regular assistance and is paid only to the extent that the expense is not covered by any other program.

The supply of child-care spaces appears sufficient to meet the needs of ETS and HS participants.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

ETS and HS primarily target the longer-term unemployed, including people with disabilities. Both programs are voluntary. All recipients considered employable are eligible for ETS.

Caseloads

The ETS program has a caseload of about 30 people, who rotate every 90 days. In addition, ETS offers résumé drop-in help and workshops.

The HS program costs $6,000 per participant per year, which means it can handle 50 full-time contracts per year.

The following types of information about participants are gathered:
- demographics
- education and training history
- employment history
- medical-social history
- child care needs and use
- length of time in receipt of social assistance

Nature of Participation

Although ETS and HS are voluntary, employable social assistance recipients must complete a self-sufficiency plan and show that they are looking for alternative methods of support to continue to be eligible for social assistance. Incentives are built into the programs to encourage social assistance recipients to participate, including training opportunities and work experience. There are no financial incentives.

Employable people who may be eligible for social assistance are expected to seek, accept and keep employment, training or rehabilitation. This policy has the following guidelines:

- Applicants who are considered employable are required to make all necessary efforts to seek self-sufficiency. To accomplish this, they will be required to
  - participate in the design of and follow a self-sufficiency plan
  - complete a monthly job search
  - use the service provided by the Canada Employment Centre (CEC) or other available programs
  - if not job-ready, engage in counselling, upgrading, retraining or other program to reach a state of employability
- If an employable applicant
  - refuses to take employment without just cause
  - is not actively seeking employment
  - quits employment or training without just cause
  - fails to take advantage of opportunities to make himself or herself job-ready

  then he or she will be considered eligible for emergency social assistance only (i.e., food and shelter).
- The decision to reduce benefits to applicants who have not availed themselves of every opportunity to become self-sufficient will be made by the supervisor upon reviewing the recommendation of the officer.
- Such applicants will be given written notice that their social assistance for the next period will be reduced, the reason for the decision and their right to appeal
- Applicants who have had their benefits reduced under this policy will be eligible for the resumption of regular benefits upon demonstrating that they have taken all necessary steps to become self-sufficient.

Under some circumstances, participants can leave the HS program and not be penalized. These include

- lack of child care
- a communication or other breakdown that makes it unsuitable for the recipient to continue in a placement
- family responsibilities
- other circumstances beyond the control of the recipient.

Orientation and Follow-up

All new social assistance applicants attend ETS information workshops to familiarize themselves with opportunities to become self-sufficient. In conjunction with their social worker, applicants complete a self-sufficiency plan.

Appeals Process

An appeals process has been established for both programs.

A social assistance applicant or recipient can appeal any departmental decision on eligibility or level of assistance. All recipients are informed about the existence of the appeals process, and a pamphlet is available.

Applicants are entitled to appeal an officer's decision to the Appeal Committee; however, from a practical point of view, an officer's supervisor may be able to provide information about a decision such that a formal written appeal is not necessary. Therefore, appeals are normally heard informally by the supervisor in charge of the officer who made the decision.

If a formal appeal is made,
- All appeals must be heard in a timely fashion, no later than 30 days after being filed.
- The merit of an appeal will be adjudicated based on the relevant sections of the Social Assistance Act, Regulations and Policies.
- If the Appeal Committee upholds an appeal, they will direct the department to comply with the relevant section or sections of the Act, Regulations or Policies.
- The Committee is restricted in its decisions to ensuring that the Act, Regulations and Policies have been applied fairly and correctly.
- The Appeal Committee is made up of a chairperson and one other member.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

The following territorial economic conditions were taken into account in designing these territory-wide programs:
- predominant economic activities
- current shifts in economic activities. Economic restructuring (e.g., the weakening of the mining industry) before the implementation of the program was considered in the design.
- employment trends
- unemployment rates of different geographic areas. For example, the massive layoffs and plant closures before the implementation of the programs were considered.
- social assistance rates of different geographic areas

Other initiatives were used to inform the design of this program. The 1993 report on social assistance includes many references to other programs in Canada, including an appendix that summarizes Ontario's and Prince Edward Island's reviews of social assistance. A national evaluation of employability programs under the Social Assistance Recipients Agreement showed the wage subsidy to be the most successful strategy for reducing the social assistance caseload, which is why the Yukon chose that strategy.

Employment Equity and Displacement

No attempt was made to design programs specifically for women, as the view was that all social assistance recipients tend to end up in low-paying jobs. The programs aim for more meaningful, better paid jobs for all social assistance recipients.

The program was designed to ensure that participants not displace workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy. If the job is advertised, it will not be subsidized. The position in line for the subsidy must be in addition to the normal contingent of workers and there must be no decrease in the hours of regular workers.

Employers who use program participants as a source of cheap labour, thereby displacing regular workers, are no longer eligible for job placement or subsidies.

Community Services

Single-Window Access

Training, employment programs and income support services have not been integrated by various levels of government and departments to provide single-window access.

Community Diversity

The programs attempt to meet the individual needs of people from different backgrounds through a self-sufficiency plan based on the individual's needs and interests. HS tries to ensure that job training is in an area that is interesting and meaningful to the recipient.

The needs of aboriginal people are primarily met by Indian and Northern Affairs.

Of the 800 people on social assistance in the Yukon, about 125 are single parents, and most of these are women. About half the recipients are single, employable men and women. The most motivated participants are usually the single parents, who are often in upgrading or taking short-term training. The Ministry of Health and Social Services works closely with single parents, who are perceived as a most demanding recipient group although they are only 16% of the caseload.

People from different ethnocultural backgrounds do not tend to stay on social assistance very long; they appear to be very motivated to find work.

Pathways is an employability program targeted to people with disabilities, who may or may not be social assistance recipients.

Only a very small percentage of social assistance recipients are under 19 years of age.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan
The Yukon Bureau of Statistics is just starting an evaluation of HS. The Bureau will look at all the past and current participants of HS, including those who have left the Yukon. The study will look at the participants before and after HS and compare them with control groups. Forty-five thousand dollars has been set aside for the evaluation of HS.

ETS has ongoing self-evaluations that result in changes to improve the program and the services offered.

Outcome Data
Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance
- the proportion of participants who leave social assistance
- the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare

Participant Evaluation
ETS workers note the progress made by recipients in following through on their self-sufficiency plans, undertaking various activities and the making subsequent evaluations.

Other Issues
There has been no attempt to measure delayed welfare exits, that is, later-than-expected exits from the social assistance system that may result from individuals extending their period of welfare receipt in order to qualify for a program.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

No significant developments have occurred since the information as outlined in this Inventory was collected.

Contact

NAME:	Mike McCann
TITLE:	Director, Social Services
ADDRESS:	Yukon Health and Social Services Box 2703 Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6
E-MAIL:	
TELEPHONE:	(403) 667-5700
FAX:	(403) 667-5819

Primary Information Sources

- Telephone interview with Mike McCann, Director of Social Assistance, June 27, 1997
- Pathways Program information sheet, Headstart program
- *Social Assistance Policy and Procedures*, Yukon Health and Social Services
- Report on social assistance, January 1993
- Ministerial statement on social assistance reform, May 20, 1993
- Social assistance newsletter, May 1994
- Social assistance newsletter, March 1995

Index of Acronyms

ETS - Employment Training Services
CCSP - Child Care Subsidy Program
CEC - Canada Employment Centre
CHST - Canada Health and Social Transfer
HS - Headstart

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Less written documentation was received for the Northwest Territories than for most other jurisdictions included in this inventory; in addition, there were no meetings with territorial officials. Consequently, there is no attempt to respond to all inventory subjects; rather, the aim is to provide a general understanding of the program in the NWT in terms of each major thematic area.

Summary

Productive Choices is part of the NWT Income Support Program. The focus is to encourage recipients to make productive choices from among community opportunities in wellness, learning, training and work experience to gain a greater degree of financial independence. The program provides temporary financial support on a conditional basis. It allows for a targeting of program and service support to specific groups such as youth and it focuses on maintaining individual responsibility. The program began January 1, 1997.

The program has five objectives: to enhance decision-making, accountability and self-reliance of communities and individuals seeking income support; to provide temporary support for individuals until they are able to make productive choices for themselves and their families; to recognize the roles of tradition and culture in people' s lives and the importance of family in the types of income support services offered and the manner in which they are delivered; to assess individuals seeking income support and refer them to community social programs primarily through one community office; and to make better use of resources, including both income support funds and community human resources.

Productive activities can be in the areas of upgrading, career supports, employment, training, harvesting or community work. Wellness activities can be in the areas of alcohol or drug treatment, mental health, family support, medical treatment, aged and handicapped support and community justice. All income support recipients considered employable must make participate in Productive Choices. If participants refuse a productive choice or do not follow through on an agreed choice, their benefits are suspended for two months. Any applicant or recipient who is aggrieved by a decision of an officer respecting the granting, refusal, suspension, reduction or amount of social assistance has the right to appeal.

People older than 60 and people with disabilities are not required to participate. Additionally, a productive choice exemption may be introduced for adults with dependants who are experiencing hardship. A person does not have to be in receipt of income support to gain access to a productive choice, but the decision is the community's.

Local flexibility is high. Communities have the authority to design and deliver local social programs, including income support programs, subject to full compliance with legislation and policy requirements. Communities can direct support toward programs that strengthen traditional activities, motivate youth to make productive choices, create jobs, further education and training through expanded child care and incentives, provide healing for communities and families and ensure secure income for those most in need. As a general principle, services are offered in accordance with need, but there is an emphasis on youth. Also, the program was designed with aboriginal peoples in mind.

Income support payout in 1996–97 was $32.823 million – about half a million dollars less than the previous year. The total program expenditure, including operating and maintenance costs, was $38.934 million. In 1994–95, there were 53,298 people receiving social assistance; the caseload has since remained relatively stable.

Information and orientation are provided to participants and the public through the participant's officer, who explains the program's objectives, rules and expectations, and through public advertising. Participants are required to report to their officer on their participation in the activity or program. It is intended that case managers be available to assist individuals with supportive problem-solving, assessment, issuing of benefits and facilitating use of community resources. However, participants' access to staff differs from community to community. Generally, if a community has less than 400 residents, participants may have problems gaining access to information and assistance.

Evaluation is an essential part of Productive Choices. Each community must establish a long-term strategic plan and a results evaluation framework and ensure that an annual audit will be conducted. Every three or four years, longitudinal surveys are conducted to determine who is in the program and to measure the program's impact on participants.

Welfare-to-Work Programs

Program

Productive Choices

Description

Productive Choices is part of the NWT Income Support Program and is mandatory for all income support recipients considered employable. The focus is to encourage recipients to make productive choices from among community opportunities in wellness, learning, training and work experience to gain a greater degree of financial independence.

The program provides temporary financial support on a conditional basis. It allows for a targeting of program and service support to specific groups such as youth and it focuses on maintaining individual responsibility.

The program includes
- conditional access
- community delivery
- a case management model
- basic benefits for transitional recipients
- a requirement to exit the program if the individual has not tried to gain access to a productive opportunity
- increased benefits to elderly people and those with disabilities
- maximums placed on shelter costs for single people
- maximums placed on furniture purchases
- integration of day-care user subsidies and the day-care allowance under Income Support
- income exemption of $300 monthly for families and $150 monthly for single people

Goals
Productive Choices has the following goals:
- reduce the social assistance caseload
- reduce the overall costs of social assistance
- get people off social assistance
- help social assistance recipients find employment. The program is based on the assumption that residents wish to be employed and that most will do what they can to become independent from income support programs, if given meaningful opportunities.
- develop the short-term work skills of program participants
- develop the long-term work skills of program participants
- make employment more attractive financially than social assistance

- promote lasting connections to the labour market
- reduce the rate at which people leave employment and return to social assistance
- reduce long-term dependence on social assistance. Forty per cent of income support recipients receive income assistance for less than two months.
- reduce poverty
- contribute to job creation
- promote economic and social development

Objectives

The program has five objectives:

- to enhance decision-making, accountability and self-reliance of communities and individuals seeking income support
- to provide temporary support for individuals until they are able to make productive choices for themselves and their families
- to recognize the roles of tradition and culture in people's lives and the importance of family in the types of income support services offered and the manner in which they are delivered
- to assess individuals seeking income support and refer them to community social programs primarily through one community office
- to make better use of resources, including both income support funds and community human resources

Program Rationale

Relatively few work opportunities exist in the NWT, and it is difficult to provide income support benefits without creating disincentives to work. The combination of relatively high benefit levels, limited employment opportunities and a narrow benefit–wage differential leaves few compensatory options. Simply, there are few incentives for recipients to want to exit the program.

Productive Choices is based on the assumption that residents wish to be employed and that most will do what they can to become independent from income support programs if given meaningful opportunities to do so. The focus of the program is to provide residents with supports to attain their presumed financial independence objective. While employment is a mainline productive choice of most communities, some communities stress other choices. The relative importance of employment as the main productive choice is directly related to the number of employment opportunities available in a community.

History

In 1991, the NWT Special Committee on Health and Social Services was created to report on the adequacy and management of income support benefits. People told the Committee that the income support system was tough to get into and even tougher to escape. They said that every step should be taken to encourage pride, a desire to work and a sense of initiative in people who receive income support.

In July 1994, the NWT government published the report *Creating Choices: Solving the Income Support Puzzle*. The report talked about the need to shift the focus of income support toward more community responsibility and choice and to redefine the government's role in income support. The following year, the Social Assistance Program was transferred to Education, Culture and Employment to link the financial support of people in need to education and training programs. To reflect the change in approach, the name of the program was changed from Social Assistance to Income Support. It includes many territorial programs, such as harvesters' assistance, youth initiatives and social housing.

The demise of the CAP Act and the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer created a new opportunity for income support reform in the NWT, because most of the former programming restrictions were eliminated.

In January 1995, a Minister's forum held discussions with community representatives across the NWT. Consistently, people said that change was needed and emphasized the following directions:

- community control
- improved coordination and integration of services
- expanded role for tradition and culture
- more youth services and programs
- better security for those who cannot provide for themselves

Pilot projects in five test sites were implemented to test community delivery models and to explore the availability of resources at the community level. These pilots were intended to improve service by increasing training and education opportunities, increasing community initiatives for employable social assistance recipients and allowing social service workers more time to focus on family support while encouraging community empowerment and decision-making.

An evaluation report published in February 1996 indicated that the pilots had been unsuccessful. Systems and programs in communities were like stovepipes: there was no integration, a necessity if communities are to have a range of productive choices to offer. The pilots did show that the key to community integration is the front-line worker, who is normally the person assessing the needs of the individuals seeking income support. The front-line worker must understand the purpose of the program and must have the basic training to determine the needs of the whole individual, including eligibility for financial support, need for social or health-related treatment or intervention (wellness activities), ability to work and need for training or education opportunities (productive activities). When the front-line worker takes on this expanded role, the program changes from one that passively administers social assistance benefits to one that actively addresses the causes of poverty.

Program Activities

Main Activity

The overall purpose of the program is to enable people to make productive choices according to their health, abilities and efforts from among community healing, education, training and work (wage and land-based) opportunities.

Specific Activities

The following types of activities are covered by the program:

- adult basic education/literacy training
- life skills training, including counselling on the stresses involved in balancing employment or school with family life and conflicts
- parenting classes
- counselling on
  - family violence
  - substance abuse
  - job preparation
  - sexual abuse
- high-school completion
- post-secondary education (income support recipients are entitled to student financial assistance)
  - university
  - college
  - apprenticeship/trades
- job-readiness training
  - counselling (e.g., pre-trades and pre-apprenticeship training)
  - job search training
  - career planning (through certification courses, staff are being trained in career counselling)
  - job referrals
- workplace-based training (on-the-job training). Assistance is also provided for work-related costs and tuition for work-related courses.
- paid work experience (see above)

- self-employment. The self-employment and small business philosophy of the government is highly compatible with the traditional lifestyle of NWT residents. The self-employment program, administered by the Department of Renewable Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, is modelled after the self-employment component under Employment Insurance, whereby loans of up to $5000 are available for business start-up.
- volunteer activities. Through the NWT's Investing in People program, income support recipients are given an additional $10 daily for working in community projects or activities, as identified by the community. The current budget for this program is $2 million per year.
- job-finding assistance, such as identifying job openings, marketing participants to employers and arranging interviews for participants. Although theoretically available across the NWT, this service exists only in the major centres.

Applicants for income support meet with a program officer who follows a three-step assessment process:

- Discuss possible activities and programs available in the applicant's community:
  - wage employment
  - unpaid employment in traditional activities
  - education or training
  - parenting or care of adult family members
  - counselling or treatment
  - community service
- Determine the activities and programs that the applicant is capable of participating in.
- Recommend to the applicant one or more activities or programs in the applicant's community in which the applicant must participate.

During the first two months, income support recipients receive food, shelter and utilities. If still in receipt of assistance after two months, the recipient makes a productive choice, after which a higher rate of assistance is issued. The higher rate includes such items as clothing, education, furniture, emergency, day-care and income exemptions. If participants refuse a productive choice or do not follow through on an agreed choice, their benefits are suspended for two months.

Productive activities can be in the areas of upgrading, career supports, employment, training, harvesting or community work. Wellness activities can be in the areas of alcohol or drug treatment, mental health, family support, medical treatment, aged and handicapped support and community justice. All income support recipients with the exception of those older than 60 and people with disabilities must make productive choices. A person does not have to be in receipt of income support to gain access to a productive choice, but the decision is the community's.

An annual per-capita budget is provided to every community to fund the wellness activities of their choice, but these components have not yet been well developed.

Labour Market Development Agreement

A labour market development agreement has recently been negotiated between the federal and NWT governments. The principle driving the agreement is not co-management but rather promoting access to federal services.

Training and Educational Activities

The very high number of secondary school dropouts is a major challenge for the NWT. Much of the skill-focused training available through the Employment Insurance Program is targeted toward adults. Therefore, many of the Income Support training and education programs aim to change attitudes and promote life skills development among youth. These programs have been developed by the Investing in People program.

Employment-Based Activities

Private sector, public sector and non-profit employers participate in the program's employment-based activities. Although the NWT has already had considerable experience with employment agreements for Northerners, employers have not been consistently satisfied with the quality of work performance.

The focus of Productive Choices is on training rather than employment, because most recipients, in light of their education and skill levels, are eligible for entry-level jobs at best. Thus, an emphasis on employment would only promote the ghettoization of income support recipients. Other priorities of the program are community wellness and traditional language and culture.

Program Design and Implementation

Responsibility for Design

The territorial departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services, along with local communities, are responsible for designing the program. Communities have the authority to design and deliver local social programs, including income support programs, subject to full compliance with legislation and policy requirements. Three-year funding agreements are signed between the two levels of government.

Responsibility for Implementation

Local communities are responsible for the implementation and administration of the program.

Further to the terms of the funding agreements, community programming meets the following criteria:

- All pertinent legislation, regulations and policies are complied with (especially in benefits, specification of differential rates and criteria for eligibility).
- Community policies and territorial and community appeal processes for individual entitlements are defined.
- Procedures are in place to ensure confidentiality of recipient information.
- A community long-term strategic plan, results evaluation framework and approval process are established.
- An annual audit is conducted.

Local Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation

Because of their flexibility in designing and delivering locally appropriate programs, communities can direct support toward programs that strengthen traditional activities, motivate youth to make productive choices, create jobs, further education and training through expanded child care and incentives, provide healing for communities and families and ensure secure income for those most in need.

An additional community incentive exemption has had no financial impact on the program's overall budget. Through this incentive, communities are allowed to use funds from other government sources to top up the earnings of income support recipients. The additional incentive could be clawed back depending on the decision of the community.

Duration of the Program

The program began January 1, 1997, and is ongoing. Participants must leave the program if they have not made a productive choice.

Funding and Program Costs

Type and Amount of Financial Assistance for Participants

Financial assistance is provided to participants on the basis of their eligibility for general social assistance. The following assistance is provided:

- wage supplements to employers
- $10 per day supplement to participants who work on community-approved projects through Investing in People

- compensation for job-related expenses. There is compensation for work-related items such as required work clothes, equipment and books. The NWT provides supports generally considered important to enhance employment opportunity, including child care, transportation, special clothing, equipment and supplies and health coverage.
- exemption of a portion of employment earnings from benefit reduction. The income exemption is $300 monthly for families and $150 for singles.
- compensation for child-care expenses
- transportation subsidies. Most productive choices are located within the community, but if one is located outside the community, the program will cover transportation costs.
- housing subsidies for rental, purchase or repairs. An allowance may be provided for the actual cost of rental accommodation to a maximum local rate approved by the Director. When participants own their own home, a monthly allowance sufficient to cover current taxes, fire insurance and other assessments may be paid, but the total allowance will not exceed the rental allowance that would otherwise be provided.
- assistance for people with disabilities. People older than 60 or having a disability receive an additional $175 monthly.

In addition, the NWT provides premium-free health care to all residents. All aboriginal people, including Métis and non-status Indians, are entitled to free dental care regardless of their eligibility for income support.

Deadlines and Subsidies

Program participants do not lose access to supplements or subsidies if program deadlines are not met.

There is no claw-back from money received from land claim settlements or from hunting, trapping or fishing.

When a person applying for assistance is entitled to maintenance under a maintenance order as defined in the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, the person must assign the maintenance order to the Director.

Financial Incentives for Employers

Private-sector and public-sector employers offering on-the-job training can receive up to $5 per hour in wage subsidies for up to 52 weeks, and must pay the employee that $5 plus at least 90% of minimum wage; as a result, participants receive more than $11 an hour.

Program Funding

Income assistance costs have almost quadrupled in 10 years, from $9 million in 1984 to $34 million in 1994. Since 1991, expenditures have increased by 41%.

Income support payout in 1996–97 was $32.823 million – about half a million dollars less than the previous year. The total program expenditure, including operating and maintenance costs, was $38.934 million.

When program responsibility was transferred from Health and Social Services, about 100 social workers were freed. The new department, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, is hiring 26 workers to administer the program.

Block funding to communities delivering Productive Choices began in July 1997. Block funding means that communities keep surpluses; deficits must be made up from other community programs and funding sources within one year. The criteria used to allocate block funds include

- population demographics
- economic environment
- low-income statistics
- community needs assessment
- program standards
- mobility and cost of living index
- agreement with the government's fiscal position and external legal obligations

Twenty-seven communities are now delivering the program.

Subsidized Child Care

Productive Choice participants are eligible for child-care expenses, and communities may choose to expand child-care programs. Day-care user subsidies and the day-care allowance have been integrated under Income Support.

New child care spaces are being created through the Brighter Futures Program. The likelihood of eliminating child care subsidies is remote given the NWT's emphasis on early childhood development.

Program Participants

Eligibility Criteria

All categories of income support recipients are eligible for Productive Choices.

People considered unemployable receive financial support that meets basic living needs and addresses quality-of-life expenditure issues.

Although potentially employable, seniors and people with disabilities are considered less capable of competing for employment opportunities. The Income Support Program includes an annual $200 benefit enhancement for seniors. Supports for people with disabilities are individualized through the Department of Health and Social Services on the basis of need.

Although, as a general principle, services are offered in accordance with need, there is an emphasis on youth in the NWT. The NWT's youth strategy has three main components:

- summer employment
- staying-in-school activities
- training initiatives

Youth educational support reflects the assumption that the best long-term employment support consists of education and training for people 21 years of age or under. Financial benefits are available for young people interested in developing skills either in school or on the job.

Caseloads

In 1994–95, there were 53,298 people receiving social assistance in the NWT. The number of cases has remained relatively the same since then.

All income support recipients with the exception of those older than 60 and people with disabilities are required to make productive choices; however, the program has not yet been able to serve everyone. Because the program just began in January 1997, staff are still being hired and trained. It is expected that the program will soon be able to serve everyone required to participate.

Although 62% of people receiving social assistance in the NWT are assessed as employable, many of them have social, medical or learning needs that prevent them from being productive members of their families and communities.

The following types of information about participants are gathered:
- demographics
- education and training history
- employment history
- medical-social history
- child care needs and use
- length of time in receipt of social assistance

The following provides an interesting perspective on the NWT income support caseload:
- 40% of people in the NWT receive income support during the year.
- 30% are 25 years old or younger.
- 65% have a grade nine education or less.

Nature of Participation

Participation in Productive Choices is mandatory for income support recipients. A program officer consults with recipients or applicants to determine when they are to begin participation in any activity or program and how long their participation should last.

If participants refuse a productive choice or do not follow through on an agreed choice, their benefits are suspended for two months.

An applicant must participate in the activities and programs recommended by the officer unless
- a person in a health care profession approved by the Director, an occupational therapist or a medical practitioner certifies that the applicant is not capable of participating in the activity or program
- the applicant has attained the age of 60 years.

Additionally, a productive choice exemption may be introduced for adults with dependents who are experiencing hardship.

Participants make productive choices that meet their needs and are available in their community. If the community is unable to provide certain services as stipulated by the program (e.g., child care), or if a service associated with a particular productive choice is unavailable, income support benefits will be maintained until services are available.

Orientation and Follow-up

Information and orientation are provided to participants and the public in two ways:

- through the participant's officer, who explains the program's objectives, rules and expectations
- through public advertising

Participants are required to report to their officer on their participation in the activity or program. During this monitoring, officers may change their recommendation about an activity or program. Officers are required to review their recommendation on the request of the applicant.

It is intended that case managers be available to assist individuals with supportive problem-solving, assessment, issuing of benefits and facilitating use of community resources. However, participants' access to staff differs from community to community. Generally, if a community has less than 400 residents, participants may have problems gaining access to information and assistance.

Appeals Process

Social assistance appeal committees are established by the Commissioner of the NWT. Any municipal council or settlement council may petition the Commissioner to establish an appeal committee for its community.

Any applicant or recipient who is aggrieved by a decision of an officer respecting the granting, refusal, suspension, reduction or amount of social assistance has the right to appeal. An appeal can also be made about the individual's participation in Productive Choices. One appeal has been made and lost.

Every applicant is advised in writing of the right to appeal and is, on request, provided with clear instructions on appeal procedures. Within 30 days after receiving notification that an applicant requests an appeal, the chairperson of the appeal board/committee holds a meeting of the committee and issues a written ruling.

The Appeal Board, after the hearing, may make one of three decisions:

- dismiss the appeal
- direct that assistance be denied, discontinued, reduced or recovered
- direct that assistance in an amount stated in the order be provided

In addition, the Appeal Board may issue such other order as may be necessary to resolve the appeal. Basic assistance is granted while an appeal is made and heard.

The Director recommends people to the Commissioner for appointment to the Social Assistance Appeal Board. No official of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the public service of the NWT is eligible. An appointment to the Appeal Board has effect for two years.

The Community

The Employment Base

Program Design Considerations

The unemployment rate in the NWT is the highest in the country, and competition for available jobs is intense. The government actively supports the hiring of local residents over the importing of skilled southern labour, but the number of NWT jobs paying enough to cover the costs of living is decreasing.

It is difficult for a family wage-earner in the NWT to earn sufficient income for the family to remain financially independent. The labour market is becoming increasingly service-sector oriented, and many new jobs are poorly paid. They are often part-time, do not provide benefit packages and come with limited security. The NWT minimum wage no longer adequately covers minimum costs of living for income recipients, although it continues to have significant application for singles, especially youth, and some people working in the hospitality industry, where minimum wages are supplemented by commissions or tips. Despite the high cost of living in the NWT, the minimum wage, an average of $6.25 an hour, is not correspondingly higher than those in other jurisdictions; in fact, it is lower than those of British Columbia and Ontario. The NWT minimum was last reviewed in 1991.

Thus, most unskilled wage jobs pay less than what a person can receive through income support. This potential disincentive for a growing number of "working poor" people who would prefer wage employment is particularly strong for earners who have large families. There is a heavy dependence on income support programs as a source of alternative income, most notably during the long winter months; this dependence demoralizes NWT residents.

Job growth cannot be expected in most communities. The geographic location, harshness of the NWT climate and cost of creating wage jobs present significant constraints to economic activity and stable labour market growth, constraints that other jurisdictions do not face. Although the government provides considerable direct and indirect government subsidy assistance for new businesses, the NWT does not possess the financial resources to compete well with southern jurisdictions. The most promising new employment opportunities appear to be in the developing mining industry.

Employment Equity and Displacement

Services offered and delivered are based on individual need; gender is not considered.

In light of labour market conditions, displacement of workers already holding paid jobs in the local economy is a non-issue.

Community Services

Single-Window Access

The integration of training, employment and income support programs is a cornerstone of welfare reform in the NWT.

A significant advantage could accrue from increased federal and territorial collaboration if existing co-location (or co-housing) of federal HRDC services and staff with territorial social and employment services and staff in three communities can be expanded, so that collaborative problem-solving can better occur with local communities.

Community Diversity

The flexibility of the Productive Choices program allows communities to direct support according to their specific needs and situations.

The program was designed with aboriginal peoples in mind, because the majority of NWT residents are aboriginal and a disproportionate number of them are in receipt of income support benefits. Over 90% of income support recipients in the NWT are aboriginal people. Regulations on harvesting and the emphasis on healing activities are examples of program aspects relating to this culture.

Of priority concern are youth and male adults. The three-pronged youth strategy is described above (see "Eligibility Criteria").

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation is an essential part of Productive Choices. Each community must establish a long-term strategic plan and a results evaluation framework and ensure that an annual audit will be conducted. As part of the devolution of responsibility for the program to the community, a community-driven accountability framework has been developed. This framework has four guiding principles:

- The program must be flexible in meeting differing needs.
- The program must be sustainable.

- There must be equity among communities in programming.
- There must be accountability to the public and government.

Every three or four years, longitudinal surveys are conducted to determine who is in the program and to measure the program's impact on participants.

No budget or plans have been set for overall program evaluation.

Outcome Data
Data are being collected to track the following outcomes:

- the number of participants who leave social assistance
- the number of participants who get jobs
- the extent to which participants who leave social assistance for employment return to welfare
- the extent to which teenage parents complete high school and get jobs

Participant Evaluation
The participant's interest and continued performance in the program will be evaluated through effective case management when all 26 Income Support workers are in place.

Data will not be collected to track changes in job readiness, nor will information be collected on aspects of family well-being such as children's health, children's development, parents' well-being and housing conditions.

Other Issues
In the NWT, many "working poor" families are worse off financially than many people in receipt of income support benefits, because recipients are provided with assistance not available to the working poor. The most significant benefit differential relates to housing, because the housing cost outlay of the working poor is a much higher percentage of income than it is for the income support recipient. Thus, income support programs can be highly attractive to the working poor.

Developments Between Spring 1997 and Spring 1998

No significant developments have occurred since the information as outlined in this Inventory was collected.

Contact

NAME: Dana Hiede
TITLE: Director, Income Support Program
ADDRESS: Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2L9
E-MAIL:
TELEPHONE: (403) 920-8921
FAX: (403) 873-0155

Primary Information Sources

- Telephone interviews with Conrad Pilon, Assistant Deputy Minister, Income Support Reform Task Group, between November 1, 1996, and June 25, 1997
- Consolidation of Social Assistance Act, October 1994
- Consolidation of Welfare Services Regulations, December 1996
- *Income Support: Community Wellness Through Productive Choices,* October 1995
- An Evaluation of Income Support Reform Plans for the Northwest Territories, June 1996
- *Community Choices: Laying the Foundation for Income Support Reform,* April 1995
- Pilot Project Evaluation Report, February 1996
- Income Support Reform, July 1996
- *Monitoring the Impact on Social Assistance Recipients of Welfare Cuts and Changes: An Update,* a report from the National Anti-Poverty Organization, March 1997
- Strategic Initiatives Status Report, April 1996

Index of Acronyms
NWT - Northwest Territories
CAP - Canada Assistance Plan
HRDC - Human Resources Development Canada